A

PRESENT

To be given to

TEEMING WOMEN,

By their

HUSBANDS or FRIENDS.

Containing

Scripture-Directions for Women with Child, how to Prepare for the hour of TRAVEL.

Written first for the private use of a Gentlewoman of Quality in the West, and now Published for the common Good.

By JOHN OLIVER, *less than the least of all Saints.*

Gen. 3. 13. *And the Lord God said unto the Woman, What is this that thou hast done? and the Woman said, the Serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.*

Ver. 16. *Unto the Woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow, and thy conception. In sorrow shalt thou bring forth Children.*

1 Tim. 2. 14, 15. *And* Adam *was not deceived, but the Woman being deceived, was first in the transgression. Notwithstanding she shall be saved in Child-bearing, if they continue in the faith, and charity, and holiness, with sobriety.*

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Imprimatur,

GEO. STRADLING, *S. T. P. Rev. in Chriſto Pat. D.* GILB. *Epiſc. Lond. à Sacr. Domeſt.*

Ex Ædib. Sab.
Mart. 27. 1663.

TO

The ever Honoured,
My truly Noble and Virtuous Friend,
The Ornament of her Countrey,
and Glory of her Family,

Mrs. BRIDGET SEYMOUR,

of *Hanford-houſe*, in the County of *DORSET.*

I Crave your Pardon, for ſo long detaining that which you have ſo deſirouſly expected. And now, that I do expoſe it to publick view, when I caſt about in my thoughts, to whom to dedicate it, I could not but retain a grateful memory, of the many noble favours, whereby your worthy Relations, *viz. your* (*a*) *Mother and your* (*b*) *Aunt, did ever oblige me.* Neither muſt I be ſo irreligious,

(*a*) Mrs. *Ann Philips* of *Montacute.*

(*b*) Mrs. *Mary Speak* of *Whitlackinton*, both in *Somerſetſhire.*

religious, as not to have a more than ordinary reſpect, for that (*c*) true Piety and goodneſs wherein they excel. But when I remember, that you have ſo fairly written after their copy, (*d*) that the vertues of both are viſible in you; ſo that any thing redounding to your juſt praiſe, will tend alſo to their honour; and ſeeing your firſt pregnancy gave me this occaſion of preſenting you with my thoughts on this ſubject in a ſhort ſcheme, which I have now thus enlarged; and you were pleaſed (as your courteous manner ever was) to accept it with that thankfulneſs, as if it had been ſome greater matter, and as if it had been of ſome uſe to you in that condition. Therefore I humbly crave leave of thoſe my obligeing friends, to dedicate this piece to you only. And had I no other errand to appear in Print, this were enough; *to tell the world for their imitation*, that he muſt travel far, and ſeek long among our Nobility and Gentry, that ſhall find any of more ingenuity, of more devotion to God, more obedience and reverence to Parents; more courteſie and reality in affable converſation, more prudence and modeſty in your ſpeeches and deportment, more reſpect to pious Miniſters, more happy in your memory to retain what

(*c*) Prov. 31. 30. Phil. 1. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. c. 4. 14, 16. 1 Theſ. 1. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. 2 Theſ. 1. 3, 4. Philem. 4. 5, 6, 7. Rev. 2. 2, 3, 9, 19, &c. Acts 9. 36.

(*d*) 2 Joh. 4. 3 Joh. 3, 4, 5, 6.

what you heard, more pious in your retention to commit it to writing next day for your private uſe, when you were in your ſingle eſtate, and the flower of your age; *a ſeaſon wherein others of your quality do mind ſome leſſer things in jeſt, but nothing in earneſt.* This made you amiable in the eyes of all that knew you, but eſpecially to him, who is now your yoakfellow, a Gentleman of whoſe worth many ſay ſo much, that I need ſay nothing. And indeed in the judgment of all that know you, what can be ſaid more for the proof of his wiſdom, (*a*) *than his making ſuch a choice?* Yet, I doubt not, but his (*b*) tenderneſs and faithfulneſs to you, and his *moſt happy immunity from the gentile vices of this degenerate age,* will give you real cauſe of continual Thankfulneſs, to that good Providence which firſt wedded *your hearts* together. But that which adds to your fame, and doth indeed *crown all,* is, (*c*) *your Perſeverance.* Your married eſtate hath not marred your pious diſpoſition; your *love* to Husband and Children, not alienated your *love* from him who *loved you firſt,* and is himſelf *altogether lovely.* Your commands and cares over your own ſervants hath not made you negligent of your *Maſter in Heaven*; nor your

Rob. Seymour Eſq; of *Hanford* in the County of *Dorſet.*

(*a*) Prov. 18. 22. Ch. 19. 4. Ch. 12. 4.

(*b*) Eph. 5. 25, *ad* 33. Mar. 19. 5. 1 Pet. 3. 7.

(*c*) *Perſeverantia tantum electorum eſt.* Bern. Ser. parv. Serm. 61. 1 John 4. 10, 19. Cam. 5. 16

domeſtick family-affairs, diverted your conſcience from living (*a*) as a *Member of the houſhold of Faith and the family of God.* Go on, I beſeech you; (for I know your Chriſtian Wiſdom and Modeſty will turn my commendations into admonitions) I beſeech you, I ſay, to go on, and to let the world ſee, that Piety is not inconſiſtent with (*b*) Gallantry, that it is not (*abſolutely*) impoſſible, *for a Camel to go through the eye of a Needle*, that one may be a *Gentlewoman*, or a *Lady*, and yet *Elect*; that noble diſpoſitions do yet remain in (*ſome*) noble breaſts; that ſome there may be, who are both *rich in the world*, and *rich towards God.* And let me further intreat you, to be always learning that Leſſon, which can *never be too exactly learnt*, viz. (*c*) to *know how to abound, and how to be full, how to uſe this world, as not abuſing it, and to rejoyce, as if we rejoyced not, for the time is ſhort.* It is but a *little time e're he that ſhall come will come.* Wherefore, the Lord burn up within us the remainders of our *droſs and tin*, that when this *droſſie degenerate world* ſhall be *conſumed by fire*, there may not be found *ſo much of the world in our hearts*, as ſhall make us fit fewel for *everlaſting burnings.* He gives us more believing apprehenſi-

(a) Eph. 5. 16.

(b) *Gratias Deo qui harum rerum & gloriæ tranſitoriæ glorioſum in vobis eſt operatus contemptum.* Bern. cap. 23.

(c) *Eſto rebus ac facultatibus tuis in vitâ hâc uti velis, dummodo tui vel moriens non obliviſcaris & ad ejus cultum atq; honorem referendam tibi ſubſtantiam tuam memineris, cujus te munere accepiſſe cognoſcis.* Salvianus ad Eccleſ cath. lib. 2. p. 407.

2 Pet. 3. 7. and 14.

ons,

ons, and lively affections, after the everlaſting enjoyment of himſelf, in that *Heaven of heavens*, where they *neither marry, nor are given in marriage*, where *they know none after the fleſh*, where *they hunger and thirſt no more*, where they have perpetual light, yet no uſe of *Sun or Moon*, or any ſublunary comforts, *but are as the Angels of God*, (i. e.) fully at reſt in their deſires, becauſe *with the Lord*, who is the center of Spirits, *in whoſe preſence is fulneſs of joy*, and *at whoſe right hand are* ſuch *Pleaſures for evermore*, that they never thirſt after the preſent *delights of the ſons of men*, but ſcorn the *very thoughts* of any mortal enjoyments; and I am much miſtaken in my conceptions of Eternity, if it prove not ſome *addition to my joy* before God for ever, if this Book of mine (whoever elſe diſregard it) may be (*as I hope it will*) an inſtrumental cauſe of real *addition to your Grace*, a help to your joy in believing, and a ſupport to you in the time of need. But, this I leave wholly to the powerful bleſſing of that God, *whoſe I am, and whom I ſerve*. And, *God forbid that I ſhould ſin againſt him, in ceaſing to Pray for you*, that you may be inwardly *fill'd with all the fulneſs of God*, and may outwardly ſhine, not in *coſtly array*, *but* (*which becometh*

Mar. 12. 25. 2 Cor. 5. 16. Rev. 7. 16. Rev. 21. 27. 1 Theſ. 4. 17. Pſal. 16. 11. 1 Theſ. 2. 19, 20. Phil. 2. 16.

1 Tim. 2. 9, 10. 1 Pet. 3. 3, 4, 5. Prov. 31. 28, 29.

cometh women profeſſing godlineſs) in good works, that the dayes of your tranquility may be lengthened, that you may *ſee your childrens children, and peace upon Iſrael, that wherein other daughters have done vertuouſly, you may ſtrive to excel them all; that ſo your Children may riſe up and call you bleſſed, and your Husband alſo may praiſe you*, that you may patiently *run your race*, and faithfully *finiſh your courſe*, that when you have conflicted with all the dangers and inconveniencies of your Pilgrimage, you may *receive the end of your faith*, and, in *a good old age enter into reſt*. If my tongue doth not always uſe theſe very words, yet my ſoul ſhall thus Pray for you *without ceaſing*, till I my ſelf ſhall ceaſe to be: till when, I crave leave to ſubſcribe,

Your ever devoted Servant
in the things of Chriſt,

J. O.

The

The Epiſtle to the Reader.

Good Reader,

'TIS *by the providence of God, that the hearts of his Servants are inclined to cull ſome one, ſome another part of* Scripture, *which formerly* lay fallow; *that no* one ſpot *of ſo good a Soil, may remain* barren *and* unimproved *for the uſe and comfort of the faithful.*

As our neceſſities *are various, ſo are* the proviſions *layed in for us:* The Life of Faith *is one of the nobleſt practical arguments which can be inſiſted upon, and the Lord hath ſtirred up many to travail in it with good ſucceſs; but thô they have almoſt looked into* every creek *and turning of humane converſation, and abundantly proved what influence Faith hath upon the ſeveral* duties *and* conditions, *which the children of God paſs through; yet I know not how this particular of noting Faith upon Gods providence* in Child-bearing, *is generally overlooked: And though it be one of the moſt important Concernments of mankind,* (the peopling of the World, *and the* multiplying of the Church, *depending thereupon*) *yet in thoſe large Treatiſes which have been written of* Living by Faith, *you ſhall not find one word of direction for this Caſe.*

Certainly 'tis a matter of Faith, *as well as other things ſo copiouſly there inſiſted upon,* Heb. 11. 11. *And* a Promiſe *is made to encourage that Faith,* 1 Tim. 2. 15. *And* the danger *is exceeding*

exceeding great both to Mother *and* Child: *To* the Mother, *becauſe the* ſorrow *and* pains of Travel *are a* monument *of Gods diſpleaſure againſt* Sin, *Gen.* 3. 16. *To* the Child, *becauſe he is* way-layed *by a ſentence of death, as he is coming into the world*, Gen. 2. 17. *Beſides, many* good Women *have died in thoſe* bitter *and* ſharp pains, *as* Rachel, *and* Phinehas *his wife: Surely the* beſt, *need to be fortified againſt ſuch* obvious fears, *and ſomething ſhould have been thought on, to be ſuggeſted for their relief.*

But this honour was reſerved for this faithful ſervant of Chriſt, *into whoſe heart God hath put it, to write a Treatiſe of this Subject, with great* diligence *and* accuracy: *It hath formerly found good acceptance, and being now* Corrected *and* inlarged, *will* (I doubt not) *meet with the like ſucceſs again. The* Matter *is* uſeful, *the* Style grave *and* ſolid, *the* Meditations proper *and* well-enforced; *and in a matter* not handled, various *and* large, *even to admiration; therefore I could not let* my Friend's *Book go, without expreſſing the ſatisfaction and contentment I took in it, and begging thy Prayers for a Bleſſing on* it *and* him, *that God would* lengthen his dayes, *and give him an increaſe of* Health *and* Gifts, *that he may furniſh us with more ſuch uſeful Tracts: I am*

Thy Servant in the Lords Work,

Tho. Manton.

TO

TO THE
Chriſtian READER.

SOME have diſputed, whether the Invention of *Printing* and *Guns*, have done more harm than good. I ſhall not determine. Only this I dare ſay, that where Guns have ſlain *their thouſands*, the Preſs hath ſlain *its ten thouſands*. And the latter kind of ſlaughter is more deplorable, becauſe it reaches to mens Souls. *Of this miſery there will be no end, while Controverſies take up our time, or Novelties take with our fancy.* I having now ſome leaſure (whereof, as even a Heathen ſaid, I muſt give an account) I bethought my ſelf, wherein I might be moſt ſerviceable to my generation, and bring moſt glory to *my God and Saviour*. Therefore knowing that the Preſs will reach thoſe who are otherwiſe out of my reach, I reſolved in ſome leſſer piece firſt, to make an eſſay how any thing of mine would paſs in the world. And thinking it preſumption (yea ſomething worſe) to tranſcribe, and pick both method, matter, and words, out of other authors, pretending a new treatiſe upon a beaten

beaten argument, which others had better handled before; finding alſo by experience, *that ſome late needleſs Writers have done the Church more diſſervice, by taking off the minds of men from more ancient Authors, than real ſervice by putting plain truth only into a finer mode*; I did therefore conclude, to accept of that for my theam, which all Divines (for ought I can find) have as with one conſent left untoucht, as if they had bequeathed it to me to handle. So that I hope, all ingenious Readers will be more candid to me, whatever imperfections their critical eyes may here diſcover, conſidering, * that I could not *plow with another mans Heifer*, nor *boaſt in another mans Line of things made ready to my hand*; but was forced to break the Ice my ſelf, to walk in an untrodden path, and to ſpin the thread out of my own bowels. And I hope, that among the many women with child, it may light into the hands of ſome, that are ſerious, humble, and teachable; whom I would intreat to peruſe it deliberately, (*if they pleaſe*) a chapter in a day, ſeconding it with Meditation and Prayer; and if they thus go through it in order, I queſtion not, but if I never hear of them, yet God ſhall ſoon hear their voice of thankſgiving, for ſome benefit by it. As for others, *I have this only requeſt to them, that they would let it paſs quietly till ſome abler head ſhall furniſh the world*

* *Itur eſt non tritâ authoribus viâ, nec quâ peregrinari animus expetat. Nemo apud nos quidem tentaverit.* Plin. præf. hiſt. nat.

Jud. 14. 18
2 Cor. 10. 16.

world with a better: * Which I ſhould be right glad to ſee. And, ſaving my reverence to thoſe abler heads, I cannot underſtand why this point ſhould be held ſo inconſiderable, as to be *below the ſtudies* of any of our voluminous learned Clerks, who yet have *the leaſure and condeſcention to write polemical Treatiſes*, about very ſmall matters. Surely, *Women in this condition have their peculiar duties, and their peculiar motives to diligence in them; and their number is conſiderable. They are a worthy part of the Community, then eſpecially, when breeding; for much of the comfort of the preſent generation, and the honour of God, and future beeing of his Church in ſucceeding generations, is concerned in thoſe Infants yet un-born.* We know that *their dangers are many*, that *their dayes are frequently ſhortned by travel*, that *their ſouls are precious*, and therefore *how precious ſhould be* * *to us any opportunity*, † *of acquainting them with God, with their duty to him, to their own ſouls, and to the children they go with.* Surely, *our Relation to, or Acquaintance with ſome of them, our Chriſtian compaſſion that we owe to all of them, doth oblige us, not only to wiſh their happy deliverance, but, as occaſion is offered, to promote their preparation for travel.*

And from this pious intention I ſuppoſe it was, that Mr. *Deering* at the end of his works hath a Godly prayer, fitted for Women with child. I ſhall here tranſcribe it.

A Prayer

* *Ego quod potui id feci; nec impedio, ſi quis in eodem circo currat ad palmam.* Lipſ. *in* Tacit.

*Gal. 6. 10.
† Job 22. 21.

A Prayer before Child-birth.

ALl thy wayes are juſt, Oh dear Father, and thy judgments are true altogether, For worthily doth man live in the ſweat of his face, and the woman bring forth children with much pain and travel, and with great danger. Yea, O merciful Father, this pain is not a ſufficient puniſhment for the grievous tranſgreſſions wherewith we and our fore-fathers have tranſgreſſed thy moſt holy will. The puniſhment is in reſpect of our demerits too ſmall, but in reſpect of our weakneſs too great for us, without thee, to endure. Wherefore, as I acknowledg, O merciful Father, this travel in child birth, which now approacheth, to be a juſt reward of my manifold ſins, ſo I acknowledge alſo thy ready Arm of defence, ſtretched out over me, and over all them that call upon thee in faith. Grant therefore O dear Father, that I may pray in faith, and patiently wait for that time of my travel, that I may thankfully and conſtantly endure it when it ſhall be preſent: Knowing that though I then feel ſome taſt of the reward of ſin, yet I feel not all; and that little which I then feel, thou doſt preſently reward with comfort and gladneſs, when a child is born into the world. The which comfortable and glad iſſue, grant me O Lord, if it be thy good pleaſure; and having received ſuch fruit of my body; grant me moreover wiſdom and ſtrength to bring it up in thy

thy fear, and to travel (as it were) again with it, till it be born again into a heavenly life, to the glory of thy holy name, and my greater joy: That ſo it may finally in Chriſt Jeſus be partaker of thoſe bleſſings, which thou doſt plentifully rain down upon the faithful and their ſeed for ever. And becauſe I am not worthy to preſent this my ſuit to thy heavenly Majeſty of my ſelf, a moſt wretched and ſinful Woman; I offer it in the name, in the righteouſneſs, and in the ſtrength of my Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt; praying furthermore as he taught us to pray, Our Father, &c.

Dr. *W. Gouge* in his Domeſtick Dutyes hath another prayer for them, not here tranſcribed.

Sure I am, that all big-bellyed women had *need to remember themſelves, and to conſider the things that belong to their peace before they be hid from their eyes.* For if women will make no other preparation for Lying in, than what is common, if they *only* get *linnen and other neceſſaryes for the child, a nurſe, a midwife, entertainment for the women that are called to their labour, a warm convenient chamber,* &c. Luk. 19. 42.

Which things I confeſs every one according to their ability ſhould be mindful of, in time; for as I have ſhewed in a diſtinct Chapter in this Book,

(a) *Gravidæ corpora curare debent. Mens item earum quietem deſiderat: quæ enim procreantur à matre in cujus utero continentur; alimentum inde capiunt, ut è terra ea quæ gignuntur ex ea.* Ariſtot. Polit. *lib.* 7.

(a) Women in this condition ſhould be very careful of their bodies while they are with child, and very careful of providing all poſſible helps and conveniences againſt their Lying in. But all theſe may prove miſerable comforters, they may perchance need no other linnen ſhortly but *a winding ſheet*, and have no other chamber but a *grave*, no neighbours but *worms*; or *if they be delivered* while yet they retain ſuch unwillingneſs of mind to prepare for death, (as we ſay of all other deliverances granted to the ungodly) they are delivered (*b*) *in anger not in favour, with Gods curſe not with his bleſſing*, and are (in all likelyhood) reſerved to the greater condemnation, when *their ſin is ripened*. Whereas, if they would *ſeek the Lord while he may be found*, if they would mind diligently the *one thing neceſſary*, if they would ſpeedily fly to Chriſt *for refuge*, then they are ſafe; for whether they live or die *their ſouls cannot miſcarry*. But of theſe things I have ſpoken more at large in the Book it ſelf.

(b) *Rich. Rogers* his ſeven Treatiſes, Treat. 6. c. 10. p. 193. *edit.* 4. Pſal. 32. 6. 1 Chron. 28. 9. Cant. 3. 1. Heb. 12. 17 Iſa. 55. 6. Luk. 10. 42.

Only I would beg leave in this ſecond Edition to interpoſe ſome ſhort admonition to the Husbands and Friends of thoſe to whom this Book is directed. And did not daily and ſad experience promulge it, that too many Husbands need ſome remembrance of their duty, I would not have been ſo importune as to ſay any thing of it.

Let

Let me therefore intreat their Chriſtian yoke-fellows, to remember, that ſeeing they know not how momentous their pregnancy is, and how much may depend on this fruit of the womb which ſhe is now burthened with; that they would with all good conſcience addreſs themſelves to know and fulfil their relative duties. This they all owe to their wives by the common bonds of conjugal fidelity; much more to faithful, godly, loving, deſerving wives, by the ſtronger bond of gratitude to God from whom they have obtained ſo great a favour as the enjoyment of her perſon, and this additional teſtimony of his bleſſing on their matrimonial union, the child in her womb.

It becomes them therefore at all times but now more, to put on, *as the elect of God holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindneſs, humbleneſs of mind, meekneſs, long-ſuffering, forbearing one another, forgiving one another; as Chriſt forgave, ſo alſo do ye.* Now put on charity (*or love,*) now let the peace of God rule in your hearts unto which ye are called, and be ye thankful; now let all bitterneſs, wrath, anger, clamour, and evil ſpeaking, be put away from you; and now dwell with her as a man of knowledg: and to this end, *Let the word of Chriſt dwell in you in all wiſdom, teaching and admoniſking her, and praiſing God with her in Pſalms and Hymns, and ſpiritual Songs.* Theſe practiſes Coloſſ. 3. 12, 13.

will cauſe her to *ſubmit to you as it is fit in the Lord*, and enable you to *love your wife, and not to be bitter againſt her.* v. 18, 19.

But eſpecially let your Supplications for her be made known to God, in this time of need; for though too few there are that pray at all, of thoſe few yet a fewer number apprehend any need of Prayer for them, till the very hour of travel, yet among thoſe that are acquainted with God, 'tis known (and I wiſh it were more known even among them) how much afflictions are ſweetned, bleſſings multiplyed, mercies ſanctified, the yoke made eaſie, and piety much promoted, by this practice, of praying privately with their wives: For which Mr. *Rob. Bolton* was ſo famous, who prayed ſix times every day, twice in ſecret, twice with his wife, and twice with his family. This will doubtleſs tye the band of love with an indiſſoluble knot, and cauſe them to live as heirs together of the grace of life. And this I eſpecially commend to them at this time.

You ſhould likewiſe implore the prayers of Miniſters and other Chriſtians for them, of which we have in the City of *London* (and other places where piety flouriſhes) frequent and happy examples, and thoſe that have feared much they ſhould not do well, have found in this and other caſes, that there are yet ſome in the world whoſe effectual

fectual fervent prayers do avail much, of which they have cauſed publick acknowledgments to be made in the Congregations of Gods people.

Theſe things being duely performed, the leſſer duties will follow of themſelves, as a tenderneſs of her health, protection, quiet, and tranquillity, a bearing with her infirmities, procuring all poſſible helps and ſupplyes, promoting her chearfulneſs and content in all fit and lawful wayes, and allowing her in ſuch odd weakneſſes as accompany that condition. For women ure alwayes of ſtrong paſſions and affections, quickly ſenſible of kindneſs, or unkindneſs; but in this condition, eſpecially of unkindneſs, becauſe of accidental melancholy from obſtructions, hyſterical vapours, many pains and illneſſes, and ſad apprehenſions of the burthen they carry and the hazard they are in, under all which 'tis impoſſible to be in ſo good a humour as at other times; for which therefore a proportionable allowance muſt in prudence be given, as they themſelves deſire or expect the like favour to themſelves in their own ſickneſs, wherein all men are lyable to many abſurdities, and troubleſome humours.

As for other particulars, I leave them to your own care as they diverſly occurr (according to mens various conditions) to your timely obſervation.

As for ſuch wretches as pretending to be the head of the wife, yet take no like care of her as the head of the meaneſt member affected with any diſtemper, that have no regard to theſe or other relative duties, as every ſeaſon calls for them, but like *Nabal* are perpetually churliſh, and bitter, and care not if their wives periſh; what ſhall I ſay, or what can I ſay bad enough of them? They are *Devils* or *Monſters* and *not Men*, for *no Man ever yet hated his own fleſh*; or if they are men, yet the baſeſt of men, *worſe than infidels that provide not for their own family*, no not the choiceſt and neareſt part of his family, *his own wife*. But I leave them either to the grace of God to convert them, or to the wrath of God to cut them off; *for with the merciful he will ſhew himſelf merciful, and with the upright he will ſhew himſelf upright, with the pure he will ſhew himſelf pure, and with the froward he will ſhew himſelf froward.*

Pſal. 18. 25, 26.

And now, Reader, let me draw to a concluſion. You muſt not expect from me the common complements of ſome writers, as that I ſhould *extenuate the worth of this Book* (*becauſe 'tis mine*) (*a*) *or tell the*

(a) *Siquidem tam imbecillia ſunt hujus temporis judicia, ac pene tam nulla, ut nec qui legunt non tam conſiderent quid legant, quam cujus legant, ij tam dictionis vim atque virtutem quam dictatoris cogitent dignitatem.* Salvian. *Salomo Epo.* p. 334.

Reader

Reader that it is unworthy of his view, needs his pardon; and was wreſted from me by the importunities of no man knows who, *that elſe I ſhould above all things have ſhun'd to appear in Print*, &c. No, *Let ſuch ſtrange diſſemblers ſtudy a truer Apology for their falſe Apologie.* When they have ſaid never ſo much to their own diſparagement, *who believes them?* Neither can I underſtand, how any honeſt man can Print a Book, and yet profeſs that he thinks *none will be the wiſer or better for reading of it* *. Let me therefore only ſay this to the Reader, that I have in this piece, *as ſmall as 'tis*, taken pains, and well conſidered of what I have written. The matter of it is generally *Scriptural*, and there is *that truth of God in it*, that commands your Chriſtian regard. And God is my witneſs, how often I implored His aſſiſtance in compoſing it, and His bleſſing on it when finiſhed. That *my labour will be accepted of the Saints is* my greateſt hope, but for praiſe or commendation from others, I am not ſollicitous. In a word, I ſend it (*a*) abroad with this confidence, that it

* As did L—— againſt Toleration, in Ep. to the Reader.

(a) *Mens enim boni ſtudii ac pii voti, etiamſi effectum non invenerit cœpti operis, habet tamen præmium voluntatis.* Salvian. *præf. in lib. de gub. Dei*, p. 3.

will, *by Gods bleſſing*, do good to ſome. And I have this aſſurance, that *there is nothing in it that can be hurtful to any*, that will either rightly take it, or let it alone. *Farewell in the Lord.*

Thy Souls Friend,

J. O.

The

The CONTENTS.

CHAP. I.

Of a ſtate of Pregnancy. page 1

CHAP. II.

Prayer the duty of women with child. p. 35

CHAP. III.

Repentance the duty of women with child. 42

CHAP. IV.

Reading of Scriptures the duty of women with child. 51

CHAP. V.

Meditation the duty of women with child. 58

CHAP. VI.

Reſignation to God, the duty of women with child. 78

CHAP. VII.

Dedication of the child to God, the duty of women with child. 83

CHAP. VIII.

Care of her own health, the daty of a woman with child. 87

CHAP. IX.

Preparation for death, the duty of thoſe women with child, who never yet repented. 90

CHAP. X.

Preparation for death the duty of godly women, when with child. pag. 99

CHAP. XI.

To reſolve upon ſome ſpecial return of thankfulneß, after their deliverance, is alſo the duty of women with child. 113

CHAP. XII.

To labour for faith in Chriſt, or, if they have faith, to endeavour to exerciſe it, in truſt and dependance upon God for pardon of ſin, is alſo the duty of women with child. 120

CHAP. XIII.

Truſting in the Lord for deliverance, the duty of women with child. 130

CHAP. XIV.

Patience in the midſt of their pains, the duty of travelling women. 152

A

PRESENT

FOR

Teeming Women, &c.

CHAP. I.

Of a ſtate of Pregnancy.

IT is obſervable, that the great God, who is equally infinite in all his Attributes, yet hath ſtyled himſelf, *rich in mercy*, *glorious in holineſs*. Surely he needs neither riches nor glory; He was rich enough to Himſelf, and glorious enough in Himſelf from everlaſting. But behold, His *good Will towards men*, and the communicative nature of infinite goodneſs. Mercy inricheth us, Holineſs glorifies us. By Mercy we partake of his Gifts, by Holineſs we partake of his Nature. By Mercy we enjoy him, by Holineſs we love him, reſemble him, and glorifie him for ever. Now ſeeing theſe two tranſcendent per-

Pſa. 86. 15. Eph. 2. 4. Exod. 15. 11.

perfections do eternally cohabite in the nature of God, and mutually concur to the benefit of man; it is moſt requiſite that our minds ſhould be filled with the thoughts and influences of both: That is, that each Mercy of God ſhould promote our Holineſs, and that Holineſs ſhould encreaſe our ſenſe of Mercies. It being therefore my preſent buſineſs, that women with child may be *in a holy frame*, and *thereby fitted for the hour of danger approaching*, I thought good to mind them of this firſt, that 'tis a mercy of much value, to be with Child in a ſtate of Matrimony.

That this is a Mercy, will appear plainly by theſe few Conſiderations.

1. 'Tis one end of Marriage, that there might be a ſucceſſion of generation after generation; that the race of mankind may not be confuſed, and diſorderly, as among
1 Theſ. 4. 4. Beaſts; nor extinguiſhed, nor diſhonoured; but may continue in a legitimate line,
Mal. 2. 15. and that God might have a *holy ſeed*.

2. That it might appear to be a Mercy, God hath, by Angels, Revelations and Miracles, at ſundry times, of old, aſſured ſome good Women that he would give this
Gen. 17. 16, 17. bleſſing to their wombs. Thus, in *Gen.* 17. 16. *I will bleſs her, and give thee a ſon alſo of her; yea, I will bleſs her, and ſhe ſhall be a mother alſo of nations.* Though upon this ſtrange promiſe we find *Abraham* full of wonder-

wondering, *ver.* 17. and *Sarah* his wife laughing, *ch.* 18. 12. Both queſtioning, at firſt, how this could be, yet afterwards God doth renew his promiſe, and they lay aſide any further doubt; *and the word of the Lord ſpoken by Angels was fulfilled*, Gen. 21. *v.* 1. *The Lord viſited Sarah, as he had ſaid, and did unto Sarah as he had ſpoken: For Sarah conceived and bare Abraham a ſon in his old age, at the ſet time of which God had ſpoken to him.* We find of the Patriarchs alſo, that they found favour with God in like manner, concerning the fruit of their womb, ever acknowledging it as the gift of God, and adoring the gracious providence of the (*a*) God and Father of all men. When they bleſſed their poſterity they carefully inſerted this in their prophetical prayers. *This laſt bleſſing of a dying Patriarch, though it be ſometime, or in ſome part expreſſed in form of petition, yet in the intent and effect thereof alway amounted to a prediction.* Thus *Iſaac to Jacob*, *God Almighty bleſs thee and make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, that thou mayeſt be a multitude of people.* Thus *Jacob to Joſeph*: *Joſeph is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough, whoſe branches run over the walls. The Almighty ſhall bleſs thee with the bleſſings of heaven above, bleſſings of the deep that lieth under, bleſſings of the breaſt, and of the womb.* In which places God is ſtill mentioned as the original of this bleſſing, and the ſupream efficient

(*a*) *Nihil de generationibus aut ſeminibus naſcitur, ſi ea non operetur Deus.* Aug. in Pſ. 118.

Gen. 28.

Chap. 49. 22, 25.

efficient cauſe of the pregnancy of the womb, and increaſe of poſterity. It was the ſame God that ſent his Angel to the
Judg.13.3. wife of *Manoah*, to tell her that *ſhe ſhould conceive and bear a ſon.* 'Tis out of queſtion, that to theſe perſons it was a mercy to have iſſue, yea, a publick bleſſing to many generations; for the ſeed of *Abraham* was the only viſible Church on earth, the only people that turned from Idols to ſerve the living God. And *Sampſon* the ſon of *Manoah* was, in his time, the only Judge, and Champion of *Iſrael*, and Type of Chriſt. But it ſeems doubtful, whether therefore all other Parents can call their Children Bleſſings; or indeed, whether the faithful have any ſuch cauſe to promiſe themſelves comfort in their poſterity, without ſome like revelation or teſtimony from heaven, as they had? To this I anſwer, that all the ſeed of *Abraham* (I mean, that continue in the faith of *Abraham*) have exceeding great and precious promiſes to reſt ſatisfied in, that extend to them all, in all ages; I mean, Gods promiſes of giving, and bleſſing Children to them.

3. And that ſhall be my third proof. If God promiſe diſtinctly, and frequently, that they ſhall ſee their poſterity, and their ſeeds ſeed, then we muſt thankfully enumerate it among his rich favours to man-
Gen.1.28. kind. This was the bleſſing to *Adam* in inno-

innocency; *God bleſſed them, and God ſaid unto them, be fruitful, and multiply, and repleniſh the earth.* And to *Noah*; *God bleſſed* Gen. 9. 1. *Noah and his ſons, and ſaid unto them, be fruitful, and multiply, and repleniſh the earth.* This bleſſing was given them as the common parents and ſtocks, of whom the future generations ſhould ſucceed; and therefore we find it tranſmitted by other Scriptures to ſucceeding ages, and will continue while the patience and good will of God towards man continues. Thus the Pſalmiſt; *Lo Children are an heritage of the Lord* Pſal. 127. 3. *and the fruit of the womb is his reward.* Likewiſe in the following *Pſalm, Thy wife ſhall be* Pſal. 128. *as a fruitful vine by the ſides of thine houſe, thy* 3, 4. *children like olive plants round about thy table. Behold, thus ſhall the man be bleſſed that feareth the Lord.* Again, the Prophet *Iſaiah* hath the ſame promiſe from God to his people *Iſrael*, thus emphatically expreſſed, *I* Iſa. 43. 3, *will pour my Spirit on thy ſeed, and my bleſſing* 4. *upon thy off-ſpring; and they ſhall ſpring up as among the graſs, as willows by the water courſes.* The like promiſes of multiplying Jer. 23. 3. their ſeed are frequently to be found *in* Ezek. 36. *other Scriptures*, ſuch as thoſe in the mar- 11. gent, which the diligent Reader may peruſe at his leiſure. Theſe may ſuffice to evince the truth of this third particular; That they who believe the Lords Prophets, that reverence his promiſes, and embrace his

his providences, cannot but ſubſcribe with their hands to the Lord, and acknowledg that child-bearing is his bleſſing, and *Children are his reward.*

4. Whatſoever the people of God have ordinarily asked of God (*a*) according to his will, that cannot but be a mercy when it is received. That ſuch prayers were not unwarrantable, is certain; for *either ſome of them were ſtirred up by an extraordinary inſtinct of ſpirit,* to ask *that which God hath intended in a ſingular and unexpected manner to give; or the common ſpirit of ſupplication put the innocent deſire of nature into a poſture of acceptation with God; they asking children of him requeſted no more than the uſual courſe of his providence, and the general concurrence of his promiſes aforementioned led them to expect.* *Abraham* had received the promiſe of Children, but long time being paſſed, and his wife *not yet conceiving*, thoughts began to grow in his mind, what the intent of God ſhould be; and therefore when God doth again renew his covenant to him, he breaks out into this earneſt expreſſion, *Lord, what wilt thou give me, ſeeing I go childleſs?* As if he ſhould ſay, Lord, thou haſt given me a great eſtate, but I have no heir; and what comfort can I take in all other enjoyments, ſeeing the main thing which thou haſt promiſed is yet behind, and I am ſtill childleſs. (*b*) And therefore either take away theſe bleſ-

(a) *Paulam ante votis quàm utero concepiſti.* Hier. ad Lætit.

Gen. 15. 2.

(b) B *Halls contempl.* l. 10. p. 117.

bleſſings, or give me the chief bleſſing of my houſe, even a ſon to be born of my wife. This prayer you know God accepted, and anſwered according to his deſire, even then when his body was old, and his wife, *by nature*, uncapable of conceiving. I ſuppoſe this dealing of God with *Abraham his friend*, and the father of the faithful, put ſome life in the hopes of his poſterity, who in the next and ſucceeding generations, did ſeek to God in the like caſe. His ſon *Iſaac* Gen. 35. *intreated the Lord for his wife, becauſe ſhe was* 21. *barren, and the Lord was intreated of him, and Rebeccah his wife conceived*, &c. When *Rachel* had no children, ſhe ſaid unto *Jacob*, Gen. 30. *Give me children, or elſe I die.* Mark his an- 1, 2. ſwer, *Am I in Gods ſtead, who hath withholden from thee the fruit of the womb?* As if he had ſaid, Look to the ſupream cauſe, to the everlaſting Father, and go to him by prayer, and beg this bleſſing of him, and then, if God anſwer thy requeſt, thou wilt be a mother of children. And no queſtion but ſhe thus did; for afterwards it is ſaid, that *God remembred Rachel, and hearkned to her*, Gen. 30. (that is, he anſwered her prayers) *and* 22. *opened her womb, and ſhe conceived.* The like courſe was long after taken by others, eſpecially by *Hannah*, who having no children, prayed with no little earneſtneſs, yea, poured out her ſoul in this buſineſs, *That God would look upon his handmaid, and* 1 Sam. 1. *re-* 11, 17.

remember her, and not forget her, and give her a man-child. And old *Eli* ſeconds this requeſt, and adds, *The Lord of Iſrael grant thee thy petition that thou haſt asked of him, And ſhe conceived and bare a ſon, and called him* Samuel, *becauſe ſhe had asked him of the Lord.*

I need add no more to this particular, but that God himſelf commanded his people to ſeek him for the performance of his promiſe: *Thus ſaith the Lord God, I will yet for this be inquired of by the houſe of* Iſrael, *to do it for them, I will increaſe them with men like a flock.* So that if Gods command be any motive to prayer, or his promiſe any incouragement to faith, then they had ground enough both for faith and prayer.

Ezek. 36. 37.

5. Barrenneſs of the womb was frequently in Scripture threatned as a judgement; and they that felt this evil did earneſtly bewail it as no ſmall affliction, therefore fruitfulneſs muſt needs be a conſiderable mercy. 'Twas a Judgment on *Abimelech*, of which they were not healed but by the prayers of *Abraham*, *God having cloſed up all the wombs of the houſe of Abimelech.* Yea *Abraham* himſelf took no comfort in all his riches, nor *Rachel* in enjoyment of *Jacob*, nor *Hannah* in the company of *Elkanah*, but was in bitterneſs of ſoul. 'Tis threatned as the puniſhment of inceſt, to be

Gen. 20. 17, 18. Gen. 15.2. & 30. 1. 1 Sam. 1. 5, 6. Leviticus 20.20, 21.

be childleſs. And the Prophet threatning the greateſt of temporal calamities to the *Jews*, mentions this in the laſt place, as the greateſt of all the reſt, *That ſeven women ſhould take hold of one man.* That is, though Marriage and Majeſty endure no compeers, yet the Wars ſhould ſo conſume the male ſex, that many women ſhould ſollicite one man (contrary to the innate modeſty of that Sex) and be content with any terms, *viz. to eat their own bread, and wear their own apparel*, that is, to be no charge to him for any thing; only *let us be called by thy name, to take away our reproach*; that is, let us be accounted and uſed as thine, and why? To take away our reproach, ſo that barrenneſs was eſteemed no ſmall reproach. For God in bleſſing *Iſrael* tells them, *that none ſhould be barren amongſt them, but that they ſhould be bleſſed above all people, and that there ſhall not be a male or female barren among them, nor among their cattel.* When the Lord would puniſh *Coniah*, this is the puniſhment; *write ye this man childleſs*; whether he were without poſterity, or they without proſperity, or ſucceſſion to his throne, is not material to the buſineſs in hand; it ſufficeth, that the expreſſion takes it for granted, that to be childleſs was a curſe, and a reproach in *Iſrael*. So that, of *Michal* (the daughter of *Saul*) who mocked *David*, it is mentioned, as a memorable and ſevere Judg-

So alſo of Tyre. Iſa. 23. 4. Iſa. 4. 1.

Exod. 23. 26. Deut. 7. 14.

Jer. 22. 30.

2 Sam. 6. 23.

ment, *that ſhe had no child to the day of her death.*

6. God hath, in his Scriptures, ever taken to himſelf the praiſe of this work; and his people have ever acknowledged it as his gift and mercy, when they conceived and bare children. Thus the wives of *Jacob*. Thus *Jacob* himſelf, anſwering his brother *Eſau*; *theſe are the children which God hath graciouſly given thy ſervant.* Thus *Hannah*, *Elizabeth*, and others, ſtill their Phraſe is, *God opened their wombs, God rolled away their reproach, God gave them children,* &c. *He maketh the barren woman to keep houſe, and to be a joyful mother of children.* Seeing, therefore, by this cloud of Scripture-teſtimonies 'tis evident, that women are not with child but by the mercy and gift of God, I muſt add a few inferences from what I have ſaid.

Gen. 30. 6, 17, 22. c. 35. 5.

Pſal. 113. 9.

Fœcunditas fœminarum & caſta vota filios deſiderantium ad quem pertinent, niſi ad Dominum Deum? Aug. Enarr. *in* Pſal. 66.

1. That none be dejected at a ſtate of barrenneſs, though among the *Jews* it was eſteemed ſo great an affliction. If the age of one or both parties render you not uncapable, you may with modeſty and moderation make your requeſt known to God, and then reſt ſatisfied in his pleaſure concerning you. For though the poſterity of *Abraham* did all deſire that the promiſed ſeed might come of them (*as ſome do uncertainly conjecture*) and had alſo too high eſteem of temporal bleſſings, and carnal ap-

apprehenſions of promiſed Bleſſings did much poſſeſs the mind of the generality; yet we are now under a *better Teſtament*, containing *exceeding great and precious promiſes of things Spiritual.* If therefore we ſtick too much on the letter of old Teſtament promiſes, we ſhall commit as great an errour in our faith, as the *Jews*, by reſting in the bare letter of the precepts, ran into groſs error in their practice. God never delighted in their moſt glorious and coſtly Ceremonies, unleſs they gave him their hearts; and now he accepts of internal worſhip with ſimplicity and ſpirituality of mind, without any further deſire of thoſe pompous obſervations. So let us learn to *worſhip God without their Rites, and to love God though without their mercies.* Let us count riches and poſterity nothing without God, and God ſufficient without either of them. If Chriſt be ours, every thing needful is ours. If we be the Sons and Daughters of God, it ſhall be no unhappineſs, if we have neither Sons nor Daughters of our own. There is then no curſe in what we have, no need of what we have not. (*a*) Where natural impoſſibilities do hinder the fecundity of the womb, they ſhould alſo (if known) have hindred marriage. But when the ſterility is meerly accidental, from ſome ſuch preſent prevailing infirmity as diſcompoſes the body of

John 4. 23, 24. Rom. 14. 6.

(*a*) *Dr. Gouge of domeſtick Duties. Greh. lo: To. de conj. &c.*

either party; it may by the bleſſing of God upon medicinal helps be lawfully and ſucceſsfully removed. But when the cauſe is unknown, and unfruitfulneſs ſeems meerly judicial, *viz.* immediately inflicted by the hand of God, in that caſe, Prayer is the Proper courſe, that he who *ſhuts the womb*, as he did the wombs in the houſe of *Abimelech*, would *open them again*, as he did theirs upon the prayer of *Abraham*. It may be, he will grant thy petition, as he hath done of ſome that for above twenty years in a ſtate of marriage went childleſs, yet at laſt *he made the ſolitary to dwell in families, and gave them children like olive plants round about their table.* Or perhaps he will not yet anſwer thee, to exerciſe thy faith, prayer, and dependance in waiting upon him; or perhaps, he will deny thee this mercy at laſt, to exerciſe thy patient ſubmiſſiveneſs to his will, and thy heavenly-mindedneſs, and wiſdom, in ſeeking ſome better bleſſing. Sure it is, *thy prayers ſhall return into thine own boſom* with ſome *anſwer of peace*; and if we ask aright, we ſhall receive (*c*) according to Gods choice, if not according to our own. He hath variety of bleſſings, which like the ſtars of heaven, differ from one another in glory. Therefore bleſs his name, if by this providence he promote in thy heart humility, faith, patience, or any other grace; (*d*) ſeeing its better to be fruit-

Luke 1. 13. Pſal. 10. 17. Pſal. 145. 19.

Perkins *Caſ. of Conſ. lib.* 2. *c.* 6. *qu.* 4. Reinolds *on Hoſ.* 14. *l.* 2. *Serm.* 1. *p.* 53. 1 *John* 5. 25.

(*c*) *Deus non ſemper audit ad voluntatem vel voluptatem, at ſemper exaudiet ad ſalutem. Iſidor. de ſummo bono. l.* 5. *c.* 3.

(*d*) Ward *on* Mat. 8. *pag.* 451.

fruitful in grace, than fruitful in chlldren. If he give us his favour (*e*) that's a bleſſing of more value. *The Angels neither marry, nor are given in marriage,* yet have happineſs enough in God. Let him be to thee *worth ten Sons.* In a word, I ſay of theſe *certain cares, and uncertain comforts,* that he who hath none of them, hath *leſs incumbrance here, and leſs to reckon for hereafter.*

(*e*) *Bonus, qui nos ribuit quod volumus, ut tribuat quod malimus.* Aug. *epiſt.* 34.

(*f*) Mat. 22. 30.

Being informed by a reverend Miniſter in *London*, that diverſe Godly perſons to whom God hath denyed children, deſired that I would enlarge upon this point; for their fuller ſatisfaction: I have therefore added theſe few particulars for them to conſider of (though what I had ſaid before contained enough in it for my own ſupport, it being my own caſe.)

1. Conſider whether it be not a judgment ſuitable to ſome ſin of yours. If you be barren under the means of grace, no wonder If you be barren as to any natural iſſue. If you open not your heart to the Spirit, no wonder if God open not your womb to Conception. This I ſuppoſe all humble Chriſtians will acknowledg.

2. Though it be inflicted for ſuch or other ſins, what follows hence? only that it ſhould often mind you that God is righteous, that his wayes are equal, and yours unequal, that you ſhould therefore walk

humbly with God, and not deſpiſe his chaſtning, but be ſo far ſenſible of it, as to be alwayes inquiſitive what ſin hinders good things from you, and what miſcarriages of yours have cauſed a miſcarrying womb and dry breaſts. That ſo by humiliation and often renewed acts of repentance you may in good meaſure remove the cauſe.

3. Suppoſe you have been careful this way, and have with all impartial ſeverity examined your heart and tryed your wayes, and yet you have no hope of children; what reaſon haſt thou (if a believer) to inſiſt ſo much upon it?

1. Hath God given thee a meet Helper, a ſuitable Yoke-fellow, how great a mercy is that? He that *findeth ſuch a Wife, findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the Lord.* But how many Women are there that though they bring that honour to the family, as to bear children; yet by their frowardneſs and perpetual pride, diſcontent, and unquietneſs, make the lives of husband, children, and all about them very uncomfortable. And *as a jewel of Gold in a Swine's ſnout*, ſo is *ſuch a woman*, though a beautiful Wife and fruitful Mother, yet *wanting diſcretion* of a dutiful Wife or careful Mother. Now therefore as in all afflictions, ſo in this, compare thy condition with the condition of thoſe that are unhappy;

Prov. 18. 22.

Prov. 11. 22.

py; in enjoying that which thou complaineſt of the want of. Wouldeſt thou change thy condition with a man whoſe wife by her ſhameful carriage is a *rottenneſs in his bones?* Is not a *dry morſel and quietneß therewith, better than a houſe full of plenty with ſtrife?* Is not a *vertuous woman a Crown to her Husband?* And a *prudent wife from the Lord? But better is it to dwell in the corner of the houſe-top, than with a brawling woman in a wide houſe*; yea, *better to dwell in a Wilderneß, than with a contentious and angry Woman.* And how often the increaſe of children doth occaſion this, every man may obſerve: If children be ſickly, beſides the grief and tediouſneſs of that common burthen, they often differ and quarrel about what means to be uſed for its recovery; if grown up, they often quarrel about its miſcarriages while one is for correction, another for fondneſs; if capable of learning, one is for putting them out, another for keeping them at home: In a word, 'tis not to be reckoned what feuds and diſorders happen from the many occaſions that attend many children, their nurſing, their humouring in every thing they would have, their faſhion and garb of apparel, their meaſure of expence for education, their choice of his calling, their opinion in matters of Religion; the Husband being oftentimes of one ſect, his Wife of another,

Prov. 12. 4, 17, 1. Prov. 21. 9, 19.

his child of a third, one loving one child beſt, the other another child beſt, from whence ariſes as perfect animoſities, factions, and formal deſigns one amongſt another in theſe little ſocieties as are in a Princes Court, or in the whole Kingdom. This is too frequent even in families that have ſome religion. And therefore though thy Wife be childleſs, yet if gracious and loving, ſhe is *more precious than rubies.*

2. What if God did expreſly promiſe to *Iſrael* that *none ſhould be barren* amongſt them or among their Cattel, what's that to us? What if he promiſed to *Abraham* that *in his ſeed all Nations ſhould be bleſſed?* What if he promiſed them the Land of *Canaan* for an inheritance? Muſt we apply theſe promiſes literally? Muſt we go to the Grand Seignior and claim the Land of Promiſe as ours? why not, as well as inſiſt upon the literal promiſe of having children? What a carnal, childiſh, legal ſpirit ſhall we lapſe into if we indulge this humour? Alas we are under a *more glorious Miniſtration*, and more ſpiritual Priviledges. Every thing among the Jews was typical of ſome ſpiritual thing among Chriſtians. Their outward enjoyments, their plenty, their numerous increaſe, ſignifies the ſpiritual comforts that we have in God, how alſufficient he will be to our ſouls and bodies in all things needful, and how able he is to enlarge

large the little flock, and multiply the number of believers in the World, as he hath frequently done ſince the publiſhing of the Goſpel. Wherefore let it ſuffice you to remember, that if ever you ſtudied the difference between the Law and Goſpel, *Moſes* and Chriſt; you muſt acknowledge, that you are now under a *better Teſtament*, *better Promiſes*, and a *better Hope*, and therefore muſt ſet your affections on better things, even the things that are above.

3. Are you in covenant with God, or no? if not, it's no wonder at the murmuring and diſcontent for the want of Children; for if God be not our God, nothing that is ours will ſatisfie. But if you be in covenant with God, then conſider what is the covenant between God and you: Did you ever throughly underſtand it? God ſayes, I will give thee my Son, to be thy *Lord and Saviour*, my Spirit to be thy *Guide and Comforter:* I will give thee *a new heart and a new Spirit*; *I will write my Laws in thy heart*, and put *my fear into thy inward parts, and cauſe thee to walk in my ſtatutes, I will keep thee from temptation, deliver thee from every evil work, give thee thy daily bread, I will never leave thee nor forſake thee, I will ſanctifie thee throughout, and preſerve thee in body and ſoul and ſpirit blameleſs unto the coming of Chriſt*, I will give thee *an inhetitance incorruptible*

and

and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reſerved in the Heavens for thee; and to this, *I will keep thee by my mighty power through Faith unto Salvation:* In the mean time, *walk before me and be upright*, and in all the wants, neceſſities and ſtreights of this preſent life, I *will be alſufficient* to thee.

Now what did thy heart anſwer to this? Did'ſt thou never in thy ſolemn dutyes ſay unto God, Lord I deſire with all thankfulneſs and *all acceptation*, to accept this gracious offer of thine to thy poor nnworthy creature; I bleſs thee for Jeſus Chriſt, and let *all that is within me bleß thy holy name*, for thy riches of grace in him: And now Lord I do renounce all my ſins, I renounce all my comforts and delights here below, and I take thee for my God and portion, my Saviour and Ruler, to diſpoſe of me as thou pleaſeſt. I reſign up my ſelf and all my concernments to thee; Lord take me for thine, and *thy will be done* in all things. *The lines are fallen to me in pleaſant places, I have a goodly heritage, I have all and abound, in having thee for my portion*; *and I envy not thoſe who have their portion in this life, who are full of children, who leave the reſt of their ſubſtance to their babes.* No, *my ſoul ſhall be joyful in the Lord, and my ſpirit ſhall rejoyce in God my Saviour*, &c. But if you ever uſed theſe or the like words in ſerious addreſſes to God, you did not I hope with your

your tongue or heart make an exception of this or any other particular, that God ſhould be your God, ſo he would give you children; and in all other things his will ſhould be done, only your will muſt be done in this. Wherefore remember this covenant, and let not ſo ſmall a matter as want of children, make any difference between God and you.

4. God is Infinitely Wiſe and Infinitely Good, and doth both know and conſider what is beſt for us. We are alway weary of our preſent condition, and are pleaſing our ſelves with many vain imaginations and aiery fancies of great happineſs, if we had the addition of ſuch and ſuch comforts, but he *that truſteth in his* deceitful *heart is a Fool.* Perhaps, the wiſe God foreſees that if you had children, you would be full of anxieties and perplexing cares how to provide for them; and would grow very worldly and covetous, and uſe this as an excuſe for your unmercifulneſs to the poor, that you have a great charge of your own, (as many do;) whereas now God hath taken away that pretence, and ſeems by his providence to tell thee, that thou having no children of thy own, muſt be of the more beneficient and publick ſpirit, more diffuſive of thy plenty, and muſt take the poor members of Chriſt as thy children, *and feed them, and clothe them, and viſit them,*

when

when they are ſick or in Priſon. If thou deſireſt children ſo much, a thouſand to one but as thou would'ſt be thus over-ſolicitous of getting eſtates for them, ſo thou would'ſt alſo be over-fond in thy affections to them, as too many are; and would'ſt have ſo little time, ſo little affection to ſpare for God, that 'twould be a *hard thing for thee to enter in the Kingdom of Heaven.* In a word; I am ſure that not one of many knows how to mannage the comforts he is ambitious of, or is fit to be intruſted with the mercies he deſires. For where they prove helps to one, they prove ſnares to more; many are apparently much the worſe, few the better, for the obtaining of that which they luſted after. Beſides, ſeeing 'tis a hazard what your children might prove if you had them, whether they might not be *curſed Children, a ſeed of evil doers, untoward, diſobedient,* a burthen if not a ſhame and an undoing to their Parents (as you ſee enough that are) it is therefore very fit that we moderate our impatient wiſhes for them, and leave it to the wiſdom and goodneſs of God, *Who is a Sun and a Shield, will give grace and glory,* Pſal. 84. 11. *And no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.*

But to conclude this buſineſs. If theſe conſiderations, and the exceeding great and precious Promiſes of the Covenant will not

not ſatisfie; if having the Lord for your God will not ſatisfie, unleſs you have every thing elſe that nature wiſhes for, you are much to blame: I have more need to beg that God would mend your heart, than that he ſhould mend your condition. Wherefore ſeeing they that have Children ſhall have *trouble in the Fleſh*, go and learn what that meaneth, *Philip.* 4. 11. *I have learned in whatſoever ſtate I am, therewith to be content:* And what that meaneth, *But this I ſay Brethren*, 1 Corinth. 7. 29. *The time is ſhort. It remaineth that they that have Wives be as though they had none*, &c.

2. 'Tis an addition to the Mercy, when God gives children in a ſtate of Marriage. Tis a Mercy to be kept in a ſingle eſtate from the unclean libidinous practices of beaſtly ſinners; and to be at laſt happily entred upon that ſtate of Matrimony, which God appointed and hath ſanctified as his Ordinance, for preventing of fornication; and 'tis alſo, I ſay, a greater bleſſing, when he is pleaſed to crown the chaſt embraces of wedlock with a hopeful Conception. Oh how dreadful are the Scripture-examples of many women, whom God having partly or totally left to *their vile affections and inordinate luſts*, having proſtituted their chaſtity, brought ſhame upon *Iſrael*, and diſparaged the innate modeſty of the female ſex; grew at laſt paſt feeling, and

1 Cor. 7. 2, 3, 4, 5.

and ſpent their life in common whoredom, till their ſin was come to a ripeneſs: But
2 Tim. 3. 1, 3. alas, in *thoſe laſt days*, the ſin of incontinency is grown more *perilous* by its commonneſs, and alſo by the impunity of our intemperate Grandees, whoſe example herein gives a law to others. And ſurely thoſe who are priviledged from puniſhment
Heb. 10. 31. here, ſhall find it a *terrible thing to fall into the hands of the living God*, who hath ſaid,
Heb. 13. 4. *Whoremongers and Adulterers I will judge*, *i. e.* though the ſecrecy of their actions, the potency of their perſons, or the negligence of Magiſtrates, may ſecure them for a while; yet there is nothing ſo ſecret but is under his eye; nothing ſo great, but is under his power. And therefore in that
1 Cor. 4. 5. day of vengeance the *works of darkneſs ſhall*
Iſa. 2. 17. *be brought to light*, *and the loftineſs of man*
1 Cor. 6. 9. *ſhall be brought low*; and they who were on earth inflamed with luſt, ſhall ſmart for ever in the flames of hell; unleſs with tears of repentance they quench theſe fires of concupiſcence, and with *water drawn out of the wells of ſalvation* quench thoſe (otherwiſe) *everlaſting burnings*. But to return
Iſa. 2. 3. Iſa. 33. 14. to my purpoſe; I mentioned before the dreadfulneſs of the examples in this kind recorded in Scripture; and verily when I read the Polygamy of *Lamech* a murtherer, I wonder not; but conſidering the Polygamy of the Patriarchs, of *David*, and the licenti-

licentious exceſs of *Solomon*, *I ſtand amazed at their irregularity, and Gods connivance and longanimity.* When I read the inceſt of *Abſalom*, and *Herod*, I wonder not; but when I think of *Lot*, *Judah*, and the inceſtuous *Corinthian*, my ſoul trembles. We count their condition ſad, who vow a ſingle life, and enter themſelves under ſinful and needleſs bonds of perpetual virginity, as the cloyſtred Nuns among the Papiſts; and theirs *yet ſadder*, who by the rigour of unwiſe Parents, or by ſome remedileſs accident, are kept all their life from marrying, as was the daughter of *Jephtah*, and others; whoſe conditions are repreſented in ſacred ſtory, as moſt ſad and deplorable. * But they are moſt generally pitied and lamented of all, who deſiring to poſſeſs their veſſels in ſanctification and honour, are ſurprized by ſome lecherous Villain, raviſhed and defloured. A judgment (*a*) ſometimes threatned in Scripture, as a fruit of Gods greater indignation, againſt that people whom he thus leaves to the licentious power of barbarous enemies.

Gen. 4.19.

1 Cor. 5. 1, 2, *&c.* B. *Hall's Contempl.* l. 10. p. 182.

Perkins Caſe of conſ. l. 2. c. qu. 3. p. 89. Judg. 11. 36, 37.

* *Ut triſtis ſine ſole dies, ſine ſidere non eſt; Sic ſine prole domus, ſic eſt ſine compara lectus.*

(*a*) Iſa. 13. 16.

As the Pſalmiſt recounting the calamities of *Iſrael*, *That their Maidens were not given to Marriage.* Which is ſpoken of thoſe calamitous times, when the men of their own Nation were devour'd by the Sword, and the Maids were at the wills of their enemies. And the Prophet among other particulars

Lam. 5. 11. Zec. 14. 2. Pſa. 78. 63.

ticulars of the wrath of God threatned upon *Babylon*, ſaies, *that their Wives ſhall be raviſhed.* A juſt Judgment of God upon the *Babylonians*, who had formerly thus abuſed the *Iſraelites*. *They raviſhed the Women in Zion, and the Maids in the Cities of Judah.* Which deed of the enemy, though deviliſh and barbarous, yet (as 'twas ſaid of that cruel act of crucifying our Lord) 'twas no other than what the hand and counſel of God had determined before; as indeed God did long before tell *Iſrael* by *Moſes*, that if they would not hearken to the voice of the Lord to keep his commandments and his ſtatutes, then this curſe among other curſes ſhould come upon them, *Thou ſhalt betroth a Wife and another man ſhall lie with her.* So in another Prophet, *Thy Wife ſhall be an Harlot in the City.* And in another Prophet, 'tis threatned againſt *Jeruſalem*, the City ſhall be taken, the Houſes rifled, and *the Women raviſhed.* All theſe threatnings were from the wrath of the Lord of Hoſts, and are uſually the effects of a Conqueſt in all ages, eſpecially where the *French* conquer, as *Flanders* can ſadly witneſs. And miſerable are they (*as men can make them*) to whom this judgment happens.

Iſa. 13. 16.

Deut. 28. 30.

Amos 7. 17.

Zec. 14. 2.

Yet I count them *moſt miſerable*, who having yielded their bodies to venereous abuſes in their youth, are with child by whore-

whoredom, and are either diſappointed of marriage with their wicked lover, or marry not till their ſhame appears.

For who can expreſs their manifold fears, cares, and ſorrows? One while, perhaps, they hide their ſin (as long as they can) but ſtill while they mute, *a fire burns within them*, and they feel the pangs of an accuſing conſcience, before they feel the pangs of their travel. Unleſs their hearts be *harder than the nether milſtone*; which if it be, their miſery is the greater. Sometimes they contrive waies of preventing its birth by wicked adventuring on ſuch *expulſive receipts*, as may prevent their ſhame. Or perhaps they are plodding how *to make away* the infant, as ſoon as it is born; or at beſt, to *expoſe it ſecretly*, that the Pariſh may keep it. Or if it be ſafely born, and the parent acknowledge it, yet while it lives 'tis an (*a*) *indelible monument* of their *infamous tranſgreſſions. For which cauſe*, (*b*) (*even for their future ſhame*) *God ſuffers unlawful commixtions to take effect.*

(*a*) B. *Halls contempl.* l. 10. p. 162.

(*b*) Engl. Annot. on Gen. 19. 26. Mark 2. 15, 16, 17. Luk. 5. 29.

And ſeeing our bleſſed and merciful Lord Jeſus Chriſt, would go to Publicans and harlots, and found them more eaſily convinced of the neceſſity of repentance than many proud *Phariſees*; let me in imitation of ſo great a pattern, deſire ſuch as are with child in an unclean and unchaſt

way, to lay their hand upon their hearts, and to conſider their wayes. I know that uſually the hearts of ſuch are much hardned, and they excuſe themſelves, with *temptations from others*, with *a fatal neceſſity*, with *the examples of many before them*; *ſo that they are not alone*, &c. Upon which excuſe they may alſo *murther*, *ſteal*, *blaſpheme*, *fire houſes*, or what not? For *theſe excuſes will ſerve alike for all ſins*. And ſo on this pretence, a man may murther *them*, rob *them*, fire *them* out of their houſes; and ſay, he was drawn away by ill company, ſtrong temptations, fair pretences; or was under ſome unhappy ſtar, or that he was not the firſt that [illegible] in this ſort.

And if any man ſerve their whores in this manner, it's no wonder, for the ſame principle that allows one wickedneſs, allows all. Wherefore, if neither this nor any other conſideration will be at all minded, *If the Laws of God and men, if the judgments that have been abroad in the world, if the loſs of their reputation among all ſober people, if the horrid diſeaſe that uſually follows this ſin, if the eternal loſs of their ſouls, if* * Heb. 10. 31. *the* * *dreadfulneſs of falling into the hand of the living God*, and *dwelling with everlaſting burnings*, be all nothing with them; then let them go on, and walk *in the wayes of* Ecc. 11. 9. *their own hearts*: But let them *know*, *that for all theſe things God will bring them to judgment*.

But

But to thoſe that have any ſober thoughts left in them, I had rather addreſs my ſelf, with ſome hope, that they may yet *recover themſelves out of the ſnare of the Devil.* Wherefore let me ask you: Are you not ſenſible of the greatneſs of your ſin, how you have broken the firſt inſtitution in Paradiſe, how you have deſpiſed the dreadful judgment of God upon the old World by Water, and on *Sodom* and *Gomorrah* by Fire, and that for theſe ſins; how you have deſpiſed and violated an expreſs commandment, which ſayes, *Thou ſhalt NOT commit adultery:* How thou haſt contemned the Prayers and Tears of the Saints, as of *David*, who for this ſin had as mucq torment as if *his bones had been broken*, Pſal. 51. 8. and was afraid he ſhould have been *utterly caſt away*, &c. How thou haſt caſt behind thee the many exhortations and warnings of God by his Prophets, who warn us *to take heed to our ſpirits*, leſt we fall into this ſin, and tell us; *Shall not God viſit for theſe things*, and *his ſoul be avenged on ſuch ſinners as theſe?* &c. Is it nothing to deſpiſe the doctrine of Chriſt and his Apoſtles, nothing to go againſt the expreſs will of God? Which is, that every *one poſſeſs his Veſſel in ſanctification and honour?* nothing, to *defile the Temple of God*, to *pollute the members of Chriſt?* for are not our bodies purchaſed by his blood, united to his perſon, inhabited

Mal. 2. 14, 15, 16. Jer. 5. 7, 8, 9. 1 Theſ. 4. 3, 4. 1 Cor. 6. 15, 16, 17.

by his Spirit? Doth not this ſecret ſin eſpecially provoke the Alſeeing eye of God? So that of ſuch as you eſpecially (becauſe you are ſo ſecret that oftentimes man can-
Heb. 13. 4. not judge you) 'tis ſaid that *Whoremongers and Adulterers God will judge.* That he will publiſh their ſhame before the whole world? And is it not ſaid of ſuch that they
1 Cor. 6. 9, 10. Rev. 22. 15. ſhall *not enter in the Kingdom of God*, but ſhall be among *thoſe Dogs that are without*; And is it nothing beſides all this, that you have a partner in ſin whoſe ſoul is like to periſh with you? This makes this ſin worſe than many other ſins, becauſe in this ſin they uſually draw another to Hell with them.

Now whether you ought to make leight of theſe things or no (though I have not told you the tenth part of what I could ſay of the evil of this ſin, the time would fail me to ſay all, yet this little contains matter enough for many thoughts about it) you may the better judge by this. I have been in the courſe of my Miniſtry, ſomewhat vers'd in the caſes of troubled conſciences. And among many others I have known ſome who were reputed holy and unblamable by all that knew them, as being indeed free from all open ſcandalous ſins, as ſwearing, drunkenneſs, actual uncleanneſs, *&c.* and kept up the profeſſion and practice of Religion in their families,

yet

yet falling into terrors of conſcience, I have found nothing lye heavier upon them than the *thoughts of filthineſs continued in*, and *habitual ſpeculative uncleanneſs*, the anguiſh whereof kindled ſuch a fire in their ſouls, as burned *like Hell*; ſo that they have for a long time counted themſelves utterly loſt and paſt remedy, and have been ready to lay violent hands upon themſelves unleſs God had prevented.

Well then, *if the righteous ſhall ſcarcely be ſaved*, they who are truely righteous are not ſaved without much difficulty, and they who are but outwardly righteous, as *Phariſees*, yet have unclean hearts *to the laſt*, ſhall not at all be ſaved; then *where ſhall the ungodly and ſinners appear*; whoſe ſins are *open before hand*, and whoſe *works of the fleſh are manifeſt?* 1 Pet. 4. 18. Mat. 24. 27, 28. 1 Tim. 5. 24. Gal. 5. 19.

All this I have ſaid for your humiliation, if *God* will *peradventure give you repentance to the acknowledgment of the truth.* 2 Tim. 2. 25.

Wherefore *knowing the terrours of the Lord*; Let me perſwade you, to look back upon your *manifold tranſgreſſions* and *mighty ſins*, and conſider all the ſad circumſtances and aggravations of thy ſin: *perhaps thou haſt profeſſed Religion*, and then oh how haſt thou given occaſion to the Devil to inſult, and to the enemies of God to blaſpheme, and grieved the Spirit of God, and vexed the righteous ſouls of thy godly acquaint- 2 Cor. 5. 10, 11.

ance; *perhaps thou hadſt the means and ſeaſons of grace*, the light of the Goſpel and pure Religion in the family or ſociety where thou did'ſt live, and it's like thou hadſt *many warnings*, and *many checks of conſcience*, and *many good counſels from godly friends*, and yet upon deliberation, and after ſome time to conſider, thou haſt again and again committed this *abominable thing which God hates.*

Oh think of this in time, and break off thy ſins by repentance. Now that God doth once more by me give thee warning, do not turn a deaf ear, do not harden thy heart any longer, do not add ſin to ſin, and wilfully make thy caſe deſperate, but as St. *John* call'd after his wicked Scholar who was turned Thief, *Return, return, there is yet mercy in Chriſt for thee, I will ſpeak to Chriſt for thee*: &c. So I ſay, Turn to God with weeping and Supplication, repent of this and *all the reſt* of thy ſins, and all the godly will pray to Chriſt for thee; and he is *able to ſave to the uttermoſt.* Wherefore do not delay any longer to ſeek after the only true remedy of all thy troubles and fears, but go to the throne *of Grace, to ask for grace and mercy to help thee in this time of need.* Bewail thy wicked heart and life, beg earneſtly that God would take away all iniquity, and according to his covenant *cleanſe thee from all thy filthineſs*, and would create

Euſeb. Ec. hiſt. lib. 3. c. 20.

Heb. 4.16.

Ez. 36.25.

in

in thee a clean heart, and give up thy ſoul to the government of his grace for the future, and enter into covenant with him to be no longer the ſervant of ſin but the ſervant of righteouſneſs, if you thus heartily, and humbly and conſtantly ſeek him he will be found of you, and will be very gracious to you, and ſpare you according to the greatneſs of his mercy. Only be ſure that you *turn not again to folly*, but *go and ſin no more*, as our Saviour ſaid to the woman taken in adultery. Joh. 8. 11.

And then you ſhall find (as one often ſayes) Repentance will heal all again. *Capel of tempt.*

As you ſee in the inſtance of a famous Harlot, who upon her repentance had *her many ſins forgiven her*, and by *Faith had peace with God.* Luk. 7. 37. to the 50.

I could willingly have enlarged on this point, but perceiving that my little treatiſe begins to ſwell beyond my expectation, I ſhall pretermit it for the preſent, only what I have already ſaid may give juſt occaſion to chaſt Virgins, to pray for *the gift of continency*; and to honeſt women, when with child, to praiſe God for preſerving them from the ſin and miſery aforementioned, and granting them Conception by their own husbands, in the comfortable eſtate of Matrimony. For we have all wicked hearts, and therefore ought to give glory to God, who only *makes us to differ.* 1 Cor. 4.

3. Though it be a choice mercy, yet it is not to be interpreted as a ſure token of Gods love. *No man knows Gods love or hatred* by any external comforts. They are diſtributed alike to the good and bad, to the juſt and to the unjuſt. (*a*) A learned man reports of a "town in *Spain*, conſiſting of "a hundred families, all inhabited by the "ſeed of one old man then living; ſo that "the youngeſt knew not what to call him, "the Spaniſh tongue having no expreſſion "higher than the great-Grand-fathers-Fa-"ther. To reckon up the numerous iſſue of ſome prolifical parents mentioned in profane Hiſtories, is as needleſs as eaſie. Scripture alſo doth abundantly ſatisfie in this, that *the wicked alſo are full of children*; ſo that outward bleſſings do not alway make a bleſſed man. (*b*) But leſt they ſhould be accounted evil, God ſometimes gives them to his people; and leſt they ſhould be accounted our chief good, he ſometimes beſtows them upon the wicked.

(a) *Lud. Vives, in Aug. de Civ. Dei l.* 15. *c.* 8.

Pſal. 17. 14.

(b) *Spencers things new and old, p.* 107.

4. I cannot ſee how thoſe women can be mindful of the mercy of God, in granting them conception, that (*a*) either refuſe (without neceſſary impediment) to nurſe

(a) *Quid eſt hoc contra naturam, imperfectum ac dimidiatum, matrem genus peperiſſe, & ſtatim abjeciſſe; aluiſſe in utero ſanguine ſuo neſcio quid quod non viderit, non alere autem nunc ſuo lacte quod videat jam viventem, jam hominem, jam matris officia implorantem,* &c. Aul. Gell. noct. Art. *lib.* 12. *cap.* 1.

their

their children themſelves, or count many children a burden, and are therefore grieved if (having many children already) they find themſelves with child again. Doth not (*b*) *even nature teach us*, that *the ſea-monſters draw out their breaſts and give ſuck to their young?* Doth not the Lion with infinite pains and hazard ſeek prey for his young ones? Doth not the Halcyon ſit cloſe on her eggs (*c*) and while the weather holds fair, ply their nouriſhment with all diligence, whence good dayes are called *Halcyon days?* Is this therefore their thankfulneſs to God for ſo great a mercy, to refuſe to embrace in their arms, and nouriſh at their breaſts, the fruit of their womb. when God joyned the bleſſings of the breaſt and the bleſſings of the womb together. (*d*) *Doth the God of Nature make Ladies and Gentlewomen without breaſts, or doth he give them breaſts in vain, or will they immodeſtly go with naked breaſts, and yet be aſhamed to uſe them? Is it not a prodigy in nature, to ſee a woman without breaſts? and is it not as foul a defect to be without natural affection?* What greater ſolœciſm in manners, than *for a woman to forget her ſucking child?* Verily this makes ſome of *our proudeſt Dames more vile than the Beaſts that periſh.* And therefore, let all perſons of honour ceaſe hereafter to *glory in their ſhame*; and let them think it their duty, when God makes them Mothers,

(*b*) 1 Cor. 11. 14. Lam. 4. 3.

(*c*) *Ulyſſ. Aldrovandi, Ornithol. l.* 20. *Plin. nat. hiſt. lib.* 20. *cap.* 31.

(*d*) *Charon of wiſdom, lib.* 3. *cap.* 14. *p.* 438. Rom. 1. Iſa. 49. 15. Pſa. 131. 2. Exod. 2. 9. Mat. 2. 11.

thers, to make themſelves Nurſes; imitating the example of *Sarah*, who, though a Lady of great (*a*) eſteem, riches, and honour, though aged and weak, yet refuſed not this motherly office. And they, that upon any account, but plain neceſſity (*i. e. want of ſtrength or milk*) do neglect this duty, whether for lazineſs, luſt, pride, or loving the faſhion more than their children, they deſerve that God ſhould curſe them *with a miſcarrying womb and dry breaſts.*

(*a*) Engl. Annot. on Gen. 11.

Hoſ. 9.14.

But there is another folly too common, and that is, if they have a great charge of children already, to wiſh and reſolve to have no more, and to be caſt down with grief and anxious care, if they find themſelves with child again. Alas, what is this but to repine at Gods mercies, and to murmure at his bleſſings? What greater diſhonour can we put upon the Word of God, which ſayes, *Happy is he that hath his quiver full of them?* Beſides, who knows, but that this laſt child may be an eminent inſtrument to Gods glory, a veſſel of uſe in his generation, and a bleſſing to the whole family? But ſo much for the firſt point; That it is a mercy to be with child, in a ſtate of wedlock.

Pſal. 127.5.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

Prayer, The duty of women with child.

I Have been longer than I intended on the firſt Chapter, to prove, that it is a mercy for women to be with child, I ſhall endeavour to be more brief in the things following; which are the ſeveral duties that pertain to women in that eſtate. If they make any conſcience of fitting themſelves for their travel, or would have any hope of Gods aſſiſtance therein, I ſhall deſire them to give heed to the Scripture-rules here gathered by my ſerious care, for their direction and conſolation.

And I ſhall begin with that which they muſt begin with, go on with, and end with; and that is, Prayer. Dr. *Gouge* of domeſt. duties, *tr.* 6. *p.* 508.

And ſeeing there be many requiſites, that concurr to render a prayer acceptable, I ſhall inſtance in ſome few, and paſs by the reſt, which are many, and are largely handled by other Authors.

You muſt be careful to direct your prayers to *the right object*, that is, *to the whole Trinity*.

To God the Father, in the name of Chriſt, by the aſſiſtance of his Spirit. (*a*) Not but that, *on ſome occaſions, it is both lawful and proper to invoke the ſecond, or third per-*

(*a*) Perkins *caſ. of conſc.* lib. 2. c. 4. 9. 10.

perſon of the Trinity; but uſually we are to ask of the Father, in the name of Chriſt, and to ſuch asking is his promiſe made. But that which I chiefly aim at, is to warn you to call upon *God only* (*b*) and not upon any Saint or Angel, as the manner is among the Papiſts; whoſe devotions are divided among ſo many Saints, that 'tis no eaſie matter to reckon their meer names. Let it ſuffice us, that this their folly hath nothing of warrant from the Scripture, but is meerly derived (*c*) from the practice of thoſe vile Heathens, *who not liking to retain God in their knowledg, became vain in their imaginations* (*d*). As the *Ethnicks* had ſeveral Gods and Goddeſſes appropriated to ſeveral Countries, ſciences, callings and diſeaſes; ſo have the Papiſts aſſigned a particular Saint for all occaſions. (*e*) *Lucina* was called upon by the Heathens, to give deliverance from the pains in child-birth; and the Papiſts have given this office of chief Midwife to St. *Margaret*. (*f*) And the better to colour the buſineſs, they tell us a ſtory in their *Legenda aurea*, (which with many other of like credit were taken out *of that lying Greek Simeon Metaphraſtes*)(*g*) 'that this 'St. *Margaret* ſuffering Martyrdom under '*Diocleſian*, as ſhe was preparing to die pray-'ed to God, that whoſoever ſhould wor-'ſhip the Tabernacle of her Body, and build

(*b*) Cobbets *treat. of Prayer, part* 3. *ch.* 12. *p.* 541. Mat. 28. 19 Joh. 16. 23

(*c*) Perkins *ubi ſupra, c.* 6. *qu.* 1. Sect. 2.

(*d*) Aug. *de Civ. Dei, l.* 8. *c.* 18. 21. *lib.* 9. *c.* 9. 17.

(*e*) Dr. *Beard* of *Antichriſt.* tr. 2. part 3. *c.* 5. *p.* 340. 341. &c.

(*f*) Alſo *Naſcio, Partunda, Ageria,* and many more. *Roſſes* view of all religions. Sect. 4. p. 126.

(*g*) Medes *apoſtacy* of the latter times. *p.* 129, 130.

'build an Oratory *in her name*, and there-'in offer ſpiritual Sacrifice, yea, that 'who ſo ſhould read or remember her 'name, might have *remiſſion of ſin*, and 'deliverance from all evil, with much 'more to the ſame purpoſe. And pre-'ſently there was a great Earthquake; 'and the Lord Himſelf with a hoſt of 'holy Angels, ſtanding by her, ſaid to 'her, Be of good cheer, and fear not, 'for I have heard thy prayers, I have 'fulfilled, and will in due time fulfil, 'what-'ſoever thou haſt asked, even as thou haſt 'asked it. But if this Goddeſs be not ſufficient, yet they have their *Lady Mary*, for an univerſal Mediatrix, to whom they attribute as much as to God the Father, and Jeſus Chriſt, as may be ſeen by their many fragments of prayers to her, *in their Miſſals, Roſaries, and our Ladies Pſalter*. And leſt any ſhould doubt of preſent help from the Virgin, they tell many wicked unclean ſtories of her not fit to be tranſcribed; and among the beſt *this is one*, (*a*) 'That a holy Abbeſs, notwithſtanding her 'vow and pretence of chaſtity, was (*as 'the manner is in their Nunneries*) got with 'child, and the Virgin *Mary* came and plaid 'the midwife for her, and ſent the baſtard 'by two Angels to a certain Hermite to be 'brought up. (*b*) *Sure, this baſtard had good luck, to eſcape the common cruelty of thoſe Nuns,*

(*a*) Vincent. *hiſt.* lib. 7. c. 86.

(*b*) Witneſs the Anatomy of the *Engliſh* Nunnery at *Lisbone* in *Portugal*, *p.* 12.

Nuns, who uſe for the moſt part to kill, and then to convey into ſome ſecret place, their baſe-born Infants. But I hope the very naming of theſe foul abſurdities will alienate any Chriſtian heart from praying to St. *Mary*, or St. *Margaret*, in this or any other extremity; but rather let them reſolve, *with the woman of* Canaan, *to come to Chriſt*. Of whom (*a*) *Chryſoſtome* obſerves (three or four times) that ſhe came to Chriſt *without any mediatour*, and had a happy anſwer. And (*b*) another Ancient reckons the worſhip of the bleſſed Virgin, or any other Saints, *a doctrine of devils*.

(a) *Ushers* Anſw. to the *Iriſh* Jeſuit. *p.* 416.

(*b*) *Epiphan. hær.* 78.

Sure it is, that the Son of God who hath one Will, and one Eſſence with the Father, and *whom God heareth alway*, hath graciouſly authoriſed us *to ask in his name*, with exceeding great and precious promiſes, that *it ſhall be given them*, that *they ſhall find*, and that *it ſhall be opened unto them*. And ſure I am, that *there is none in heaven beſides him, nor any other name given under heaven; for there is but one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Chriſt Jeſus, who is able to ſave them to the uttermoſt that come to God by him, ſeeing he ever liveth to make interceſſion for them. He is the way, the truth, and the life. The way*, whereby our prayers have acceſs into the Father's preſence; *the truth*, whereby the Fathers Will is revealed to us; and *the life*, whereby

John 14. 13. *ch.* 16. 16, 23, 24.

1 Tim. 2. 5.

Heb. 7. 25.

by we enjoy the glory and preſence of God for ever. Now, who would deſire to walk by ſtar-light, when the Sun ſhines at noon day? or to be beholden to the borrowed righteouſneſs of any Romiſh Saints, when the Sun of righteouſneſs himſelf is riſen with healing in his wings? If our Saint-worſhip were tolerable, methinks it ſhould have been in the dayes of *Moſes*, and the Prophets; but our adverſaries the Papiſts *do confeſs*, that this Doctrine and practice was then altogether unknown. And if the *Iſrael* of God did never petition *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, or *Jacob*, *Noah*, *Daniel*, or *Job*, to intercede for them; much leſs doth this foolery become us, *to whom a Saviour is born, and to whom a Son is given*, who *by one offering hath perfected for ever them that are ſanctified, i. e.* hath made perfect proviſion for his Saints, that their prayers ſhall through him be received while they live, and their ſouls received when they die. Therefore let others, if they will not be diſſwaded, fetch a compaſs about by the mediation of canonized Saints; but let us who *have received the truth as it is in Jeſus, hold faſt our profeſſion*, and go *by him only to the Father*. In a word; They that expect the leaſt crumb of comfort by the mediation of Saints ſhall ſpeed no better than *Dives*, in beſeeching *Abraham* for *a drop of water to cool his tongue in Hell*. But leaving theſe wretch-

Iſa. 9. 6.
Heb. 10. 14
Eph. 4. 21.
Heb. 4. 14.
John 6. 45. & 14. 6.
Luk. 16. 24.

wretches to their incurable folly, let us proceed.

'Tis not ſufficient for women, or any other, to pretend a good heart towards God; but they muſt alſo offer Him *the calves of their lips.* I confeſs, the chief requiſite of a praying Chriſtian is, to lift up the heart to God, in defires and *groans that cannot be uttered*, to flie to him for help in diſtreſs, and to make him our rock of defence. As the *Iſraelites*, when affliction was upon them, *they remembred that God was their rock, and the moſt high God their redeemer.* (*a*) Of this the Apoſtle ſpeaks, *Pray continually*, that is, mentally; but I ſay, this is not all, we muſt *glorifie God with our bodies and ſpirits*, which are his; we muſt *lift up our hands with our hearts to God in the Heavens*; we muſt *bow our knees to the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, and not keep ſilence, but utter our requeſts with our tongues, and open our mouths, that our lips may utter his praiſe, and that we may with verbal expreſſions quicken our ſelves, in *making our requeſts known to him, with ſupplication and prayer*; we muſt offer our *ſtrong cries*, and *ſmite on our breaſts*, with the Publican, and *bemoan our ſelves* with *Ephraim*, and *ſeek the Lord with weeping, and with ſupplication.*

Rom. 8. 26.

Pſal. 78. 35.

(*a*) Perkins *caſ. of conſc.* lib. 2. c. 5.

Lam. 3. 41.

Iſa. 62. 7.

As for the many qualifications required in the Perſon and Duty, I ſhall ſumm them up

up in the words of a moſt learned Divine.

(*b*) 'God is ſo holy, and jealous of his 'worſhip, that he expects there ſhould be 'preparation in our acceſſes to him; Pre- 'paration *of our perſons*, by purity of life; 'preparation *of our ſervices*, by choice of 'matter; preparation *of our hearts*, by 'finding them out, ſtirring them up, fix- 'ing them, fetching them in, and calling 'together all that is within us to prevail 'with God. (And a little after, he adds) 'We muſt attend to Gods will, as the 'rule of our prayers, to his precepts and 'promiſes, for the matter of our prayers, 'and to the guidance of his holy Spirit, as 'the life and principle of our prayers, 'without which we know not what to ask. 'Prayers thus regulated are moſt ſeaſonable 'and ſoveraign duties in times of trouble. 'The key which openeth a door of mercy; 'the ſluce which keepeth out an inunda- 'tion of Judgments. *Jacob* wreſtled, 'and obtained a bleſſing, *Amos* prayed, 'and removed a curſe. The woman of '*Canaan* will not be denied with a de- 'nial.

(*b*) Dr. *Reynolds* on Hoſ. 14. p. 12. Job 11. 13. Luk. 15. 17, 18. 2 Sam. 7. 27. Iſa. 64. 7. Pſa. 57. 7, 8. 2 Chr. 30. 19. 1 Joh. 5. 14 2 Sam. 7. 25. Rom. 8. 36. *Aug.* ep. 105 & ep. 121. c. 15. Hoſ. 12. 4. Am. 1. 1, 7. Mat. 16. 24, 27.

As for other circumſtances, conditions, modes, and concomitants of Prayer, as Faith, Humility, Sincerity, Importunity, Patience, *&c.* I ſhall refer the Reader to thoſe many Engliſh Authors, which have purpoſely and profitably handled this ſubject,

Mr. *Parre*, his *Abba Father*. D. *Wilkins* his *Gift of prayer*. Mr. *Cobbet* his *practical diſc. of prayer*.

ject, and ſo crave leave to go on to what follows, only begging the Readers excuſe, if in this Chapter and upon all other occaſions, I ſpeak againſt *Popery*, ſeeing when I writ the firſt *Edition*, *it was ſpreading and increaſing all* over *England*, but now their *burning of London*, and their inſolent threatnings and carriages, have awakened a juſt indignation in all true Engliſhmen againſt them. However 'tis good to ſee their falſehood and to be eſtabliſhed in the Scripture-truths.

CHAP. III.

Repentance, The duty of women with child.

REpentance is never out of ſeaſon, except with Eſau *and* Judas *we go about it too late.* 'Tis the common duty of all, whether married or unmarried, whether with child, or not, to renew the daily practice of Repentance; but, as the Scriptures abundantly teſtifie, it is *moſt eſpecially requiſite*, when afflictions are felt or feared, and dangers approach; ſo that it muſt needs be ſeaſonable for women, in this condition, to renew their repentance without delay. For whereas it is unſafe to truſt to our former repentance, leſt it be found defective and unſound; therefore the ſureſt courſe is to repent, again and again. Who among the

the daughters of *Eve* can remember the ſin of her who was firſt in the tranſgreſſion, *without ſhame and ſorrow?* And yet while you blame her folly in eating the forbidden fruit, the guilt thereof, without repentance, will redound upon your ſelves. Her ſin was turning from the Creator to the Creature, Repentance is a returning from ſin, ſelf, the world, and the tempter, to God.

And while you carry a burthen in your wombs, then, if ever, you had need to be eaſed of the heavier burthen of ſin, which cannot be done without repentance. You muſt repent of the miſcarriages of your lives, if you would be provided againſt the danger of a miſcarrying womb. You muſt willingly endure the pangs of repentance, if you would ſafely bear the pangs of your travel. You muſt uſe your ſelf to godly ſorrow in the time of your ſtrength, if you expect any comfort from God in the hour of your pain. You muſt humble your ſelf before God, if you deſire that God ſhould then raiſe you up. You muſt take out the ſting of ſin by repentance, and then afflictions cannot hurt you. In your health remember your ſin, and God will in judgment remember mercy.

And I therefore ſubjoyn this duty of Repentance, next after Prayer; becauſe if

Pſa.66. 18. Hab.1. 13. *we regard iniquity in our hearts, he heareth us not*, but *is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity.* So that if we pray without repenting hearts, we do but mock God, and deceive our ſelves. We cannot draw nigh to him in truth, nor will he draw nigh to us in mercy, unleſs we withdraw our ſelves from iniquity, and be at the greateſt elongation from ſin that can be.

But this repentance muſt be univerſal, for all ſin. (*a*) For one leak will ſink a ſhip, one wound ſtrikes *Goliah* dead, as well as three and twenty did *Cæſar*; one *Dalilah* will do *Sampſon* as much miſchief as all the Philiſtines; one wheel broken diſorders a whole clock; one vein's bleeding, if not ſtanched, will let out the life; one Flie will ſpoil a whole box of ointment; by eating one apple *Adam* loſt *Paradiſe*; one *Achan* was a trouble to all *Iſrael*; one *Jonah*, if faulty, is a lading too heavy for one ſhip, So one ſin cauſes too much injury to God, and brings too much guilt and burthen upon the conſcience: (*b*) If ſeven thieves enter the houſe, ſix of them being overcome, and the ſeventh lie lurking in ſome corner, the Maſter of that houſe is ſtill in danger. If the bird, or the mouſe, be held in the ſnare, though but by one leg, their whole body is in danger. Thus all ſin, and the leaſt ſin, muſt be repented of. *Pharaoh* would let the People go, after he had endured

(a) *Spencers* things new and old, *p.*298. p. 117.

(b) *Tho. Stapletoni prompt. morale.*

Exod. 10. 26.

dured many plagues, ſo as they would leave their ſheep and their cattel behind them. So *Sathan* would keep ſomething of ſin in us, which may be as a pledge of our returning to him again. And we would willingly, when we are convinced of the neceſſity of repentance, yet roll ſome ſweet morſel under our tongues, and be excuſed in one or two of our incurable ſins; but if we will, in earneſt, forſake the *Egyptian bondage* of ſin, we muſt reſolve, with *Moſes*, that not a hoof ſhall be left behind us, but all iniquity put away out of *our hands*, and all our *ungodly words* left off, and all our *wicked thoughts* forſaken, and all imaginable wickedneſs mourned for, and by degrees relinquiſhed. (*c*) As the Dove fears every feather of the Eagle, and the skin of a Lion ſtuffed with ſtraw will make the leſſer beaſts to keep a diſtance; ſo all the circumſtances, occaſions, reliques and appearances of ſin, muſt be bewailed, ſuſpected, and avoided. For as a woman delivered of her child is not out of danger while the after-birth remains; ſo a repenting ſoul, diſcovering, confeſſing, and forſaking ſome ſins, is not yet ſafe, if there be a reſerve of other ſins. And while your body is yet in any ſtrength, you ſhould ſet about this neceſſary work of repentance, without delay. For the bitterneſs and weight of ſin muſt be taſted and felt one time or other;

(*c*) *Ulyſſ. Aldrov. Ornithol. l.* 14.

(c) *Hier. Drexelii. Gymnaſ. Jæn.*

(*d*) ſo that, as a Landlord takes a greater fine of his Tenant at firſt, and the leſs rent afterwards: So the more time, care, and tears you ſpend in repentance at firſt, the leſs it will coſt you to renew it afterwards But if you ſtill put it off, till your travel comes ſuddenly upon you, at beſt you run a great hazzard, and lade your ſelf with ſuch a burthen, and incur your ſoul into ſuch danger, from which it will be more difficult to be delivered, than from the peril it ſelf, of child-bearing. So that if your body and ſoul ſhould both miſcarry, and die together, God is juſt, and *your blood will be on your own head*, for your former neglect of the time and ſpace of repentance.

Ezek. 33. 4

Beſides this, which chiefly concerns your ſelf, the conſideration of the child which you carry in your womb ſhould quicken you to repentance, as ſoon as you feel it quick within you: For, as the fancy and longing of a woman with child doth ſometimes make ſuch ſtrange impreſſions on the child in the womb, that it carries ſome ſign thereof after its birth; And as the hurt, bruiſe, or fall of a woman, in that condition, makes her child ſometimes imperfect, monſtrous, cripled, or deformed, to the day of its death; ſo you ſhould fear, leſt the ſin of your ſoul, by nature, tranſmit ſome like foul diſpoſition, and leave ſome

ſome ſuch ſpot on your child, as ſhall be a ſtain to his name, and a blemiſh to your family. Leſt your corruptions prove innate qualities in him; leſt you *have eaten ſowre grapes, and your childrens teeth be ſet on edge.* Ezek. 18. 2.

You ſhould alſo take care to prevent the curſe of God on your child, for your ſake. Think with your ſelf, if God ſhould ſay to me as to *Hagar, Behold, thou art with child, and ſhalt bear a ſon, and he ſhall be a wild man, his hand will be againſt every man, and every mans hand againſt him.* Would you not count your ſelf unhappy, in being the mother of ſo deſperate a child? Have you not alſo read what God ſayes of *Ephraim, Their glory ſhall flee away as a bird from the birth, and from the womb, and from the conception; though they bring forth children, yet I will bereave them; they ſhall bring forth children to the murtherer.* The meaning is, that the judgments of God ſhould light on their poſterity in a moſt ſevere and dreadful manner; his curſe ſhould be upon them in the womb, and appear in their deſtruction, as ſoon as they were born. Inſomuch that the Prophet being exceedingly troubled at the thought thereof, prays, in the next words; *Give them, O Lord, what wilt thou give them? Give them a miſcarrying womb and dry breaſts.* That is, ſeeing of two evils unavoidable, the leaſt is moſt eligible; let it pleaſe the Lord, Gen. 16. 11, 12. Hoſ. 9. 11, 12, 13. Hoſ. 9. 14.

if he will not remove, yet to alter, or mitigate his curſe. If I may not pray for good to his people, let me intreat for a more tolerable evil. Let them therefore, O Lord, rather not conceive or bring forth, than to ſee them butchered and ſlain by their mercileſs enemies, or expoſed to ſuch heavy calamities as might make them to wiſh that they had never been, or that our wombs had been their graves. Now ſeeing this is threatned them for their ſins, and is written for your admonition, fear,
Hoſ. 14. 1, 2. therefore, *leſt God do ſo to you, and more alſo.* And for the prevention of theſe miſeries on your unborn infants, *take with you words, and turn to the Lord, that he may take away all iniquity, and receive you graciouſly.*

But in this practice of repentance, you muſt take heed and beware of the leaven of Popery; for you need not make auricular confeſſion to a Prieſt, nor ſeek Popiſh abſolution from a Confeſſor, nor expect their injunction of ſome tedious or ridiculous penance, nor eſteem penance a Sacrament, nor undertake a fruitleſs or idolatrous pilgrimage, or think to ſatisfie God by ſome good works for any ſin paſt, nor be at coſt to purchaſe an indulgence, or to buy a pardon from that Man of ſin. Only be
1 Joh. 1. 9. Pſal. 38. 13. 32. 5. 33. 24. *faithful and juſt in confeſſion to God*, and he will be *faithful to forgive.* Yea, as ſoon as *thou reſolveſt in thine heart, with David, no*

longer

longer to conceal thy tranſgreſſions, but to acknowledg them to God, he will forgive.

Renew this practice as often, and with as much ſorrow and contrition, as you can; and the Father of mercies will *ſurely hear thee bemoaning thy ſelf*, and *will remember thine iniquity no more.* And therefore abound in ſecret mourning, till *thou heareſt what God will ſpeak, he will ſpeak peace to his people; but let them not return again to folly.* Make it, therefore, thy chief aim in repenting, to be renewed in the inner parts, to have a *new heart*, and a *new ſpirit*, that ſo *all old things may paſs away, and all things become new.* Whereas, if you ſpend never ſo much time and ſtrength in confeſſion, lamentation, and ſupplication, and yet your heart unchanged, you will, notwithſtanding, *return, with the ſwine, to her wallowing in the mire.* How many ſuch penitents hath the Church been peſtered with? Many men in ſickneſs, many women when near their travel, have ſeemed ſerious Converts, and have uttered many penitential deſires and purpoſes, both to God and man; but when once they are delivered, they forget their obligations to God, and *ſuffer ſeven worſe devils to enter.* And therefore make as ſure work with your deceitful Hearts as you can, by mournful confeſſion, ſevere mortification, more holy converſation, *&c.*

Jer. 31. 18. Pſal. 85. 8. Iſa. 32. 6. Ezek. 36. 26. 2 Cor. 5. 17. Eph. 4. 24. Mat. 12. 45.

(*a*) Com-

(*a*) Thus ſhould good women make amends for their firſt offence, *Eve* no ſooner received an ill motion, but ſhe delivers it to *Adam*; ſo they ſhould no ſooner receive good, but they ſhould impart it. Biſh. *Hall's Contemplation, lib.* 10. *p.* 195.

(*a*) Communicate your zeal to others, reprove, rebuke, exhort, and warn your family, night and day, with tears, *bring forth fruit meet for repentance*, that others may *ſee you have been with Jeſus*. This do, and continue doing, while you yet are upon your legs, and while you have breath in your noſtrils; and then you ſhall find *your labour not in vain in the Lord.* but a means to ſupport you under bodily labour: *Then you ſhall ſee of the travel of your ſoul*, when God ſhall aſſiſt you in the hour of travel. Therefore, *gird up the loyns of your mind*, be intent and ſedulous in this great work of making peace with God, and he will deliver you in that critical hour; and *raiſe you up, that you may glorifie him.*

Pſal. 50. 15.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

Reading of Scriptures, The duty of women with child.

GOD gave no ſmall gift to the world, in giving the light of the Sun, (*a*) which among viſible creatures is the higheſt emblem of his own Eſſence and Glory: Without which the whole earth would languiſh, and be worſe than a howling wilderneſs. But it was a greater, to give to our ſouls underſtanding and immortality, whereby we tranſcend all ſublunary creatures, and are capable of communion with God and his Angels; Without which we could never aſpire to Heaven above, but muſt have been ſlaves to the meaneſt creatures upon earth. And yet it was a far richer benefit to mankind, to give us the written Word, and the greateſt (next to Jeſus Chriſt, the eſſential Word) which the Father of Lights could have beſtowed on the world; in compariſon of its greater glory, the light of the Sun hath no glory. By this, our underſtandings are made wiſe, and our immortality made happy.

(a) *Qui vult cum Deo ſemper eſſe, ſemper debet orare & legere.* Aug. de temp. Ser. 1.

The Scriptures are the myſteries of Gods eternal counſel, the portraicture of thoſe infinite perfections, that lay hidden in his breaſt from all eternity, the written copy

copy of that Law of God, which was originally written in the heart of *Adam*; the only ſupream rule of good and evil. They contain ſuch knowledg as will enlarge, raviſh, and transform a teachable and ſtudious ſoul. *In the volume of this book it is written of Chriſt*, (*that God of gods, that Head of Angels, that King of kings*,) whoſe Incarnation is the Myſtery of Myſteries, and whoſe work of Redemption is the ſumm of all Mercies. In a word, in them is an exact map of the heavenly *Canaan*, an exact delineation of the way thereunto, and a full account of the deeds and evidences of our inheritance therein.

Pſal. 40. 7.

How abominable, then, is the blaſphemy of the apoſtate Papiſts, (*a*) who equal the Pope, or a Council, or Traditions, with the Scripture; and ſpeak diſhonourably of the authority and ſufficiency of the ſacred Volume? And how intolerable is that bloody crew, which will inflict the moſt cruel deaths on thoſe of the Laity that procure a Bible in their vulgar tongue? (*b*) Unwilling they are, that *their folly ſhould be made manifeſt* to all men and women; knowing that ignorance is the mother of their idolatrous devotions. But, to leave controverſies, let me go on, and

(a) B. *Jewels* reply to *Hard. Art.* 15. *fol.* 518.

Doctor *Jackſon* on the Creed, *lib.* 2. *ſect.* 1. *ch.* 1. *pag.* 238. *ad.* 405.

Alphonſus Caſtrenſ. de punit. hæret. lib. 3. *cap.* 6.

(b) *Scripta divina hæreticorum fraudes convincit & furta detegit.* Tertul. lib. de Trin.

and remember thoſe women to whom I ſpeak, that it is their duty to read, their happineſs to enjoy, and ſhould be their delight to peruſe the holy Scriptures. * Certain we are, that *God commanded all Parents to teach their children the words of his Law*, and that accordingly *Solomon* was inſtructed by his Mother, *Apollos* by *Priſcilla*, and *Timothy* by his Grandmother *Lois*. † Both the *Greek and Latine Fathers* did uſe, with all vehemency, to exhort their hearers to get them Bibles, and read the Scriptures at home, and to talk of them to each other, without exception of ſex or age. Yea, ſaith a Popiſh writer, leſt women ſhould be thought to be excluded from the ſtudy of the Scriptures, there is a tradition that (*a*) *the Mother of our Lord* was wont to ſpend from the ninth hour of the day till Sun-ſet, in reading the old Teſtament. He mentions alſo one *Silvia*, a noble Lady, that dedicated part of every night to reading the Bible; and of one *Cecilia*, a Roman Lady, who, when at home, never let her Bible go out of her hands, when ſhe went abroad alwayes carried it in her boſom, when ſhe was in company alwayes made it her diſcourſe: Thus, ſaith he, ſhe lived a chaſte Virgin, and died a ſtout Martyr, being ſo raviſhed with the ſweetneſs of Chriſt, by daily reading ſomething of him, that ſhe willingly endured the bitterneſs of her

* Baſil. *by* his Nurſe *Macrina.* Baſ. *ca.* 74.

† Polycarp. *ad Philippenſes.* Origen. in *Levit. hom.* 9. Auguſt. *in* Coloſſ. 3. Chryſoſt. *in* Joh. *hom.* 1. *& alibi ſæpius.*

(a) Ma. *Spalatenſ. de vitâ per exempla religioſe inſtit. l.* 2. *cap.* 5. Trap. *on* Luk. 1. 51. And doubtleſs the elect Lady, to whom St. *John* wrote an Epiſtle, might as lawfully read other Scriptures as that Epiſtle.

her laſt torments, out of the deſire ſhe had to be with Chriſt. (*b*) *Hierom* likewiſe wiſhes one Lady to whom he writes, to hang theſe jewels alwayes at her ears; and to *Furia*, a widow, he gives this advice, to read chiefly the holy Scriptures; and after them, ſome learned writers, who were known to be ſound in the faith. How much he abhorred the reading of idle Romances and obſcene Poets, is well known by other paſſages of his. He alſo relates at large the great love *Marcella*, a noble Widdow, had to the Scriptures, and of the Lady *Paula*, (*c*) that ſhe cauſed all her maid-ſervants to learn frequently ſome portion of the *Pſalms*, or other Scripture, by heart. (*d*) And another Ancient, giving ſome account of the knowledge, and piety then abounding in all Chriſtians, ſayes thus, *Ye may commonly ſee not only the teachers and rulers, but the meaneſt artificers, underſtand the principles of our Religion; and not only learned women, but alſo ſuch women as live by their labour, Seamſters, Maid-ſervants,* &c. *can reaſon of the Holy Trinity, and of the Creation of the World, and of the Nature of mankind, a great deal more skilfully then either* Plato *or* Ariſtotle *were ever able to do.* Thus he. (*e*) And we find that wicked apoſtate *Julian* objecting it againſt the Chriſtians as an abſurd thing among them, that they

(*b*) More of this nature in his Epiſtles to *Euſtachium*, *Salvina*, *Celantia*, and other *Ladyes*.

(*c*) Hier. *in Epitaph. Paulæ.*

(*d*) Theodoret *de naturâ hominis. lib.* 5. The like of *Gorgonia* Siſter of *Nazianzen* in his *Orat. funebri* in *Gorgon.*

(*e*) *Cyrill. contra* Julian. *l.* 6. *& l.* 7.

they permitted their women and children to read the Scriptures. So that we ſee whoſe followers the *Papiſts* are, in finding the ſame fault with Proteſtants now. And were there no other argument, this might ſuffice with a religious mind, that, as *Tertullian* ſaid, it could not but be ſome great good which *Nero* condemned; ſo it cannot but be a ſingular profit to all men, women, and children, to read, daily in the book of God, ſeeing *Julian*, and the Pope, and all the inſtruments of Satan do ſo much oppoſe it. 'Tis therefore to be bewailed, that whereas in the times of former perſecutions, men would travel by night many miles to one that could acquaint them with any part of the Scripture in the Engliſh tongue, and would give twenty ſhillings for a new-Teſtament, and a load of Hay for the Epiſtle of St. *James*, (*the Word of the Lord being precious in thoſe days*) and yet now that Bibles are cheap, and children are more generally taught to read than in former ages, yet (I ſay) 'tis a lamentation, that Proteſtants had need be exhorted to read the Scriptures. Let me therefore conclude this point with my earneſt intreaty to all readers, eſpecially the afflicted, and women that expect that dreadful affliction in child-bearing, to be more conſtant in reading the Scriptures. The Scriptures being (*a*) as one ſayes, a Shop of me-

1 Sam. 1. 1.

(*a*) Baſil. *in* Pſal. 1.

medicines from whence you may fetch remedy for every malady and danger. There you may ſee, as I ſhewed you in the beginning of this book, what was the practice of pious women when barren, what when with child, what ſongs of thankſgiving when delivered, what courſe they took for the education of their children, *&c.* God alſo hath commanded you to *ſearch the Scriptures*, and hath promiſed to *give underſtanding to them that ſearch for wiſdom.* If you underſtand not, pray to him and you ſhall underſtand. *For the meek he will teach his way, and ſatisfie the deſire of every hungry ſoul:* (*a*) It cannot be (ſay the Fathers) that any with earneſt ſtudy and diligence reading the Scriptures, ſhould be left deſtitute: for although we lack the inſtruction of man, yet will God himſelf enter into our hearts, and caſt a beam of light into our minds, and open things that are hidden, and become our teacher of ſuch things as we know not. He reveals that to women and children, which he hides from the wiſe and prudent. (*b*) And as reading the Scripture angers the Papiſts, ſo it angers the Devil, and rejoyces the good Angels that attend us, yea 'tis a delight to Chriſt Himſelf. He looks down from heaven, to *ſee if there be any that underſtand, and do good, and ſeek after God*; and he ſays to every member of the Church, *I know thy*

John 5.39. Prov. 2. 4, 5, &c.

(*a*) Aug. 9. Chryſoſt. *contra anomæos, hom.* 3. and in Gen. *hom.* 35. Origen. in Exod. *hom.* 9.

(*b*) Origen. in Num. *hom.* 27. and in Joh. *hom.* 20.

Pſal. 14. 2. Rev. 2, 2. ch. 9, &c.

thy works. 'Tis alſo comfortable to your ſelves, 'twill give you a ſight of ſin that you may be humbled, and of a Saviour by whom you may be reconciled to God. 'Twill direct you to every good work, 'twill ſeaſon your mind with holy thoughts, furniſh you for every condition, that ſo when your time of pain approaches, you may *through patience and conſolation of the Scripture have hope.* Only remember to read the book of God with more reverence than any other book. The *Jews* are curious, even to ſuperſtition, in handling the Sacred Volume, and keeping it clean, eſteeming it a prodigious miſchance if any of them lets his Bible fall to the ground. (*a*) And the *Moſcovites* touch not this Book without ſolemn bowing even to the ground; theſe things are needleſs; but needful it is, that when we read the Bible, we compoſe our hearts *to an awful and attentive frame*, remembring that our maker, and preſerver, and redeemer, doth then acquaint us with the Law by which we muſt live here, and by which we ſhall be judged hereafter; therefore lift up a prayer to him, as *David* often doth, for more quick underſtanding, and a more obedient heart; and do not huddle it over as a task, and then lay it aſide as a burthen, but chew upon it as thy food; yea charge it upon thy memory, and repeat and (*b*) digeſt it often

Rom. 15. 2.

(*a*) *Roſſe* his view of all religions, *p.* 482.

Prov. 2. 3, 4, 5. Pſal. 119.

(*b*) Perkins *caſ. of conſc. lib.* 2. *c.* 7. *p.* 71.

often in thy Meditation, that it may at laſt take hold of thy heart, and work in thee that which is well pleaſing in the ſight of God. But of Meditation I ſhall now ſpeak in the next place.

CHAP. V.

Meditation, The duty of women with child.

IT cannot be, but women with child, when they begin to grow big and unwelldy, muſt be taken off from ſuch manual imployments in which they were buſied before, and muſt allow themſelves ſome reſt and retirement; therefore they ſhould labour to make a good uſe of that *time* they have for Prayer, and Reading, and Meditation, *&c.* *Meditation* being *then moſt in ſeaſon when other things are out of ſeaſon; and hath herein the advantage of other duties, that it requires only the inner man to be imployed therein. Idleneſs is alway dangerous, eſpecially the idleneſs of our minds. If the Devil find the ſoul idle, he'll ſoon imploy it.* And therefore were it only to prevent the incurſion of ſinful and troubleſome thoughts in our ſolitary ſeaſons; and alſo, as one ſayes, (*a*) leſt our ſpirits like milſtones, wanting griſt, grate themſelves with vexation, fears, diſcontents, and waſte themſelves in a fruitleſs endleſs melancholy; I ſay,

(*a*) Bolton, *Gendir. p.* 71.

ſay, were it only to avoid this grand inconvenience, it were ſafeſt to have alway ſome choiſe head or other, of pious, profitable matter, to buſie our heads and hearts about: Nothing being more known among Chriſtians than the precepts and preſidents of this kind in Scripture: Nothing more frequent in the writings and Sermons of Divines. Therefore I ſhall not meddle with the duty in general, but as it properly concerns women with child.

And for the better direction of thoſe who are willing to make uſe of the help offered them, I ſhall preſent them with thirteen Meditations, which they may enlarge upon at their pleaſure: Not doubting but that divers of them are able to add many others as pertinent and profitable as theſe.

MEDITATION I.

(*a*) The Rabbins have a notion, that there are four ſpecial Keyes, which the Lord reſerveth in his own power. 1. *The Key of Rain.* 2. *The Key of Food.* 3. *The Key of the Grave.* 4. *The Key of the Heart.* To which may be added, *The Key of the Womb.* God hath opened my womb; oh that my heart were opened alſo! Nature hath locked it againſt God, and my cuſtomary ſins have cauſed me, inſtead of opening

(*a*) *J. Plantavit. Floril. Rabbinicum.* Deut. 27. 12. Pſ. 104. 28. 1 Sam. 2. 6. Acts 16. 4. Gen. 30. 21.

when Chriſt knocketh, to add more bolts to keep him out. But oh, that he *who hath the key of David, who openeth, and none*
Rev. 3. 7. *can ſhut*, would break open, or *lift up the everlaſting gates of my ſoul, that the King of glory might come in, and ſup with me.* Then ſhould I have more cauſe than yet I have, to rejoyce in him, for opening my womb, and *opening to me the treaſures of rain and food*; yea, then I ſhould not care how ſoon a grave were opened for my body, if my heart were firſt opened by the grace of Chriſt.

MEDITATION II.

There is a different generation and conception. The children of *Adam* are generally propagated by ordinary generation; but *Sampſon*, *Jephtah*, &c. had wonders accompanying their conception. The elect of God, who are in due time regenerate, are ſupernaturally born and conceiv-
Joh. 1.13. ed, *not of fleſh and blood, but of the Will of God.* Jeſus Chriſt, as to his humane nature, was not begotten, but miraculouſly conceived in the womb of the Virgin; as to his Divine nature, he was not conceived, but eternally begotten by the God and Father of all things. Though I am not like to be the Mother of a Prophet, or a Judge in *Iſrael*, though I have no miraculous

or

or ſupernatural conception, but am with child, through Gods bleſſing, by my huſband, in a ſtate of matrimony; yet I hope, deſire and pray that God would prepare ſome ſingular bleſſing for the fruit of my womb. Oh that it might, as was Saint *John, be ſanctified from the womb*, and *be filled with the holy Ghoſt, that we may have joy and gladneſs, and many may rejoyce at its birth.* Oh that it might pleaſe God ſo to bleſs this unborn child, that it may *grow and wax ſtrong in the Spirit*, and may become ſo eminent in holineſs of life, that others may ſay, *Bleſſed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps that gave thee ſuck.* Luke 1. 14, 15. Luk. 1.80. Luke 11. 27.

MEDITATION III.

And this is the ſixth month with her who was called barren. It is moſt probable, ſhe was called, by way of reproach, *the barren wife*; and therefore not much ſet by, but rather vilified by the mothers in *Iſrael*, God hath reſtrained the wombs of ſome from bearing, but hath made mine fruitful. Whether the barrenneſs of ſome good women, which I know, be to them a curſe, I know not; but, oh my ſoul, how great a curſe is ſpiritual barrenneſs! And how cnrſed a creature do I then deſerve to be! I am *wiſe to do evil* (though none teach me, or tempt) *but to do good* Luk. 1.36. Jer. 4. 22.

I have no knowledg. I have ſtrong affections to love my friends, ſelf, *&c.* to hate my enemies, and to be vext at worldly croſſes, and fear temporal dangers; but how weak is my love to God, hatred of ſin, and fear of his all-ſeeing eye! I have done many things for my credit, profit, health, eaſe, *&c.* but how *barren am I, and*
2 Pet. 1.8. *unfruitful in the work of the Lord*, and how little affected with the concernments of my ſoul! I have plenty of words for carnal company, and can, without ſtudy or help, vent my paſſions with much fluency and readineſs, if my ſervants or inferiours diſpleaſe me; but the Lord knows, and my ſoul is confounded to remember, that when fit occaſion and opportunity have been offered, yea, a neceſſity laid upon me, of reproving or admoniſhing my relations or acquaintance, of inciting and quickning my family to true godlineſs, I have, many a time, ſaid little or nothing, I have quenched the fire of zeal that burned within me; I have by my needleſs ſilence ſeemed to own what my ſoul abhorrs; yea, when I have purpoſed and reſolved to ſpeak with ſerious earneſtneſs in Gods behalf, my heart hath been barren of fit matter, my tongue hath wanted words, and I have ſtood mute and ſilent, as if poſſeſſed with a dumb Devil. Now, whence is this? If I be married to Chriſt, and implanted

planted into him, *why is it thus?* Surely *I* Mic. 27.
am not ſtreightned in him, but in my ſelf. Wherefore, oh my ſoul, go to him who only *worketh both to will and to do of his own good pleaſure*; and never ceaſe importuning him, 'till he quicken me by his Spirit, and cauſe me to know and enjoy the vertues and powers of my Saviour. Then ſhall I *bring forth my fruits unto holineſs, and my* Rom. 6. 22.
end ſhall be everlaſting life.

MEDITATION IV.

Haſt thou not poured me out as milk, and Job 10. 10.
curdled me like cheeſe? The child in my womb is made of the like ſubſtance as I was; and though I now have growth, ſtrength, beauty, or comelineſs, yet I was once imperfect enough, when I was newly begotten of man, and conceived in the womans womb. Alas, how vile are thoſe materials of which my body was made? Scripture draws a veyl of modeſt and metaphorical expreſſions over this unſightly act of generation. And when I conſider, oh my ſoul, the poor original of my body, *Alas, what preheminence have I herein above a beaſt?* what cauſe to abhorr all thoughts of pride, and to walk humbly all my dayes? If the Peacock lets fall his Plumes, when he beholds his black feet, have not I cauſe to be caſt down with a leſs eſteem of

Miſeret atq; etiam pudet æſtimantem quàm ſit frivola amantium ſuperbiſſimorum origo, Plin. Nat. Hiſt. *l.* 7. *c.* 7.

Phil. 3. 21. my ſelf, when I conſider my *vile body?* In nothing more vile, than in its firſt coagulation of ignoble matter.

MEDITATION V.

Job 10. 11. ὀῖον ἐν τῇ τῦ γάλακτος πήξει, τὸ μὲν σῶμα τὸ γάλα ἔστιν, οὕτω τὸ ἀπὸ τῦ ἀῤῥένος ἐν τῷ θήλει μεριζόμενον. *Ariſt. de gen. l. 1. c. 20.* where he uſes the ſame phraſe and ſimilitude with *Job.*

Thou haſt cloathed me with skin and fleſh; thou haſt fenced me with bones and ſinews. Though, in regard of the matter and manner of my generation, my body is no better than a bag of flegm, a lump of blood, a moiſtned clod of earth; yet when I raiſe my mind to the work of my Creator, *who faſhioned me round about, covered me in my mothers womb, and formed me in the loweſt parts of the earth,* I have then no cauſe *to ſay to my Father, What haſt thou begotten? or to my Creator, Why haſt thou made me thus?* If I may, in every creature, ſee ſome prints and footſteps of the wiſdom, power, and goodneſs of God, in their formation, production, and conſervation of their kind, in a continual ſucceſſion for the uſe of man; how much more cauſe have I to ſearch out this work of God; in which there is as much of excellency, curioſity, and exactneſs of skill, as in all the creation beſides. * Much is ſaid by Philoſophers, Phyſicians,

* *Scrupuloſiſſimè inter doctiſſimos quæri ac diſputari poteſt, quod utrum ab homine inveniri poſſit ignoro, Quando incipiat in utero homo vivere,* &c. Auguſtin. *tom.* 3. *Ench. ad Laur.* c. 85.

Ana-

Anatomiſts, *&c.* concerning this great ſecret of Nature, the Child in the Womb. They ſpeak, with much probability and rational conjecture, of the manner and matter of generation and conception; of the very day when the womb, by its natural heat, begins to operate towards it, and when it receives its firſt * change into a fleſhly ſubſtance; what day the brain, heart and liver, begin to be diſtinguiſhed, and when it receives a humane ſhape in other parts, though the whole be no bigger than a ſmall flie. Alſo how it is nouriſhed, and in what place and poſture it lies, if male, and in what, if female. What day it receives, by the gift of God, a living ſoul, and when it begins to ſtir and calcitrate in the womb, *&c.* But the further I dive and ſearch into this matter, the more I am at a loſs; ſtill new queſtions do ariſe, which I cannot reſolve: Even *this knowledge is too wonderful for me.* *Solomon* hath put a queſtion, which I think himſelf could hardly anſwer; *Knoweſt thou how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child?* Therefore, oh my ſoul, let me ſing that ſong of *David*, and, if poſſible, with *Davids* heart. *I will praiſe thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made, marvellous are thy works, and that my ſoul knoweth right well. My ſubſtance was not hid from thee, when I was made in ſecret, and curiouſly wrought in the loweſt parts of*

* Some adventure to reſolve it thus, *Sex in lacte dies, ter ſunt in ſanguine terni. Bis ſeni carnem ter ſeni membra figurant, Gerh. l. th. to. 7. de conjug. p. 491.* Pſ. 139. 6.

Eccl. 11: 5.

Pſal. 139. 14, 15, 16, 17.

Gerhard. *lib. theſ. tom. 7. de conjugio, p. 492.* ſpends ſome time in pious reflections on this place, but 'tis chiefly for the learned, and therefore I ſhall not tranſcribe it.

of the earth. Thine eyes did ſee my ſubſtance, yet being imperfect, and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were faſhioned, when as yet there were none of them: How precious alſo are thy thoughts unto me, O God, how great is the ſumm of them? But I muſt not, I cannot, here leave off this delightful Meditation, but muſt again praiſe the Lord, for that he hath not executed the curſe of *Adam*, to the uttermoſt, upon us. Though ſin hath robbed us of many moſt deſirable perfections, yet there is that left, with which, and for which we may glorifie God. If we ſurvey the frame and building of this earthly tabernacle, we ſhall find that rare fitneſs of every part, and that ſymmetry of the whole, that we cannot but ſay, *its builder and maker is God.* What ſhall I ſay of the ſeveral members and particles of our bodies, of the ſcituation of the more noble parts, and ſubordination of the reſt; of the influences of the higher parts on thoſe that are leſs noble, of the many channels of conveyance, whereby the inner parts tranſmit blood, ſtrength, and ſpirits, to the exteriour and moſt remote? What, of the beauty, ſtrength, tenderneſs, majeſty, and ſingular faculties of ſome parts; of the contiguities and artificial connexion of all parts? what of the ſagacity of the five Senſes, the mixture of the four Elements, the correſpondence our bodies have with

with all creatures, the reſemblance of the three Regions, yea, of the three Heavens, *&c.* For which cauſes, Man is called a *little World, the meaſure of all things, the pattern of the Univerſe, the miracle of miracles*, &c. Yea, mans body is, yet, in regard of its majeſty, ſtrength, beauty, and noble faculties of its ſeveral parts, in ſome meaſure, *after the image of God.* (*a*) And *God himſelf is pleaſed to repreſent his perfections and operations by ſeveral parts of the body of man.* If therefore, the ſerions prying into any one part take up the time and ſtudy of the learned, inſomuch that *Galen* was turned from Atheiſm in ſtudying the ſecrets of mans body, and preſently praiſed and acknowledged our Creatour; then, oh my ſoul, let that which made him a Chriſtian, make me a more thankful Chriſtian; that I may more zealouſly glorifie God with my body, and may hereafter have all its primitive perfections reſtored at the Reſurrection, *when God ſhall raiſe it in honour and incorruption, and make it like the glorious body of Jeſus Chriſt.*

(*a*) 2 Chr. 16. 9. Dan. 9.18. Pſ. 34. 16. Job 40. 9. Pſal. 74. 3. Iſa. 49.16, *&c.*

MEDITATION VI.

Anatomiſts themſelves are utterly to ſeek, what reaſon to give for the opening and ſhutting of the womb: But though I know not the natural cauſes hereof, yet I find

find by the effects, that the child is quick within me. And oh that I could ſay with the like certainty, that though I *know not the way of the Spirit*, or how grace comes in, and ſin goes out, how Chriſt enters, and Satan is diſpoſſeſſed; yet I feel by the effects, that whereas *luſt did once conceive and bring forth ſin*, yet now grace conceives holy motions, and brings forth religious actions; that whereas my heart was *a cage of unclean Spirits*, and barren of goodneſs, yet now *Chriſt is formed within me*; now I feel by happy effects, that grace is quick within me, and quickens me to every good work, *Wherefore, bleſs the Lord, oh my ſoul; and all that is within me bleſs his holy name. For he that is Mighty, hath done to me great things, and Holy is his name.* And *whence is this to me, that the grace of Chriſt ſhould come to me?*

Pſal. 103. 1.

Luk. 1. 43, 49.

MEDITATION VII.

Gen. 25. 22, 23.

Rebeckah conceived, and the children ſtrugled within her, and ſhe ſaid, If it be ſo, why am I thus? That is, if I am heard of God in my requeſt, and am with child by his bleſſing, whence is this ſtrugling, this painful conflict, and ſtrange unquietneſs of the fruit of my womb? *And ſhe went to enquire of the Lord, and the Lord ſaid unto her, Two nations are in thy womb*, &c. So, when I look into my

my ſelf, and obſerve the commotions that are in the womb of my heart, I conclude, Surely there are two nations within me; *the fleſh*, with all its motions, *luſting againſt the Spirit* and its grace; and the Spirit with its gracious influences, alway ſtriving againſt the ſinfulneſs of my carnal part. Gal. 5. 17.

Now bleſſed be God, that ſeeing ſin will yet keep poſſeſſion, that it hath no quiet abode within we, but meets with reluctancy and oppoſition from my ſpiritual part. But *oh wretched creature that I am*, how oftten is evil preſent and prevalent with me? how many are thoſe pangs of ſorrow, thoſe ſighs and groans that my miſchievous and reſtleſs corruptions cauſe within me?

But if it be ſo, that the power of the moſt High hath overſhadowed me, and true grace be implanted in my ſoul, then I ſhall ſeek to the Lord, that he would cauſe the better part in me to be the more prevailing part; that he would water and give encreaſe to theſe tender beginnings, and give me at laſt a ſafe and happy deliverance from *this body of death.*

MEDITATION VIII.

If men ſtrive and hurt a woman with child, ſo that her fruit depart from her, and yet no miſ- Exod. 21. 22, 23.

miſchief follow, he ſhall be ſurely puniſhed, &c. Women with child are liable to many dangers; a fall, a bruiſe, an accidental ſtroke, a fright, a ſtrain, the taking ſomewhat that proves expulſive, or the diſappointment of ſomewhat they longed for; theſe and ſuch other contingencies are noxious to them, and oftentimes cauſe abortion, or the miſchance of her fruit departing from her. Such was the caſe of the Church, when it was with child with many Converts, *the great red Dragon* watched the deſtruction of her, and of her fruit.

Rev. 12. 2, 3.

And thus it is with every repenting ſoul. What ſecurity ſoever there be among thoſe *careleſs women that are at eaſe*; how little inward care or ſorrow they feel, while they forget God; how unacquainted ſoever with the hurt and ſmart of ſin, or Satans ſtriving with them, before they are acquainted with God: Yet, no ſooner do they *eſpouſe themſelves to Chriſt, and conceive purpoſes of holy living, and begin to be fruitful in any grace, but they ſhall have many adverſaries in the world, and eſpecially the god of this world, ſtriving againſt them; to affright them, to tempt them to receive ſuch principles, company, ſuggeſtions, as may quench their graces; or to deprive them of that Spiritual food they long for, or to intice them to ſtrain their conſciences, or ſome way or other to cauſe them to fall, that they*

Iſa. 32. 9, 10, 11.

they may be wounded, bruiſed, &c. *and the fruit of grace depart from them.* But oh my ſoul, hath God ſuch care of the unborn Infant as to provide a ſpecial law in its behalf; and will he not much more take care of that grace which he hath begotten in my Soul? Oh my God, *keep me that the Evil One touch me not.*

MEDITATION IX.

In ſorrow ſhalt thou bring forth Children. As the firſt general curſe, *In dying thou ſhalt dy*, brought not only the pains of death, but intended alſo all the miſeries of our life; ſo this particular curſe upon women, brings not only pain in travel, but comprehends all the infirmities of Child-bearing, I find that the child in my womb brings many weakneſſes and aches upon me; but oh how ſad and deplorable are thoſe deeper ſickneſſes and maladies, which I have brought upon it? Its body partaking of my ſubſtance, partakes unavoidably of my natural pollution. *Its Soul*, though it come immediately from *the Father of Spirits*, yet (*I know not how*) is upon its infuſion into this tender Infant, ſubjected to the common miſery of the Children of *Adam*; who having loſt the image and likeneſs of God, ſin and corruption muſt needs follow. *I am an unclean veſſel, and how*

Gen. 3.16. *Auſtin, Calvin,* &c. think the reaſon of the ceremonial purifications of women that were newly delivered, was to ſignifie the natural pollution the child was born in. As *A. Burgeſs* of *Orig. ſin, part* 1. *cap.* 10. *Sect.* 2. *p.* 50. Pſal. 58. 3. Iſa. 48. 8.

how can any clean thing come out of me? Oh my ſoul, what need have I *to be ſanctified throughout both in Body, and Soul, and Spirit.* And, Oh my God, repair by thy grace, what ſin hath made ſo defective in me and mine.

MEDITATION X.

Our bleſſed Saviour and Great Prophet Jeſus Chriſt, foretelling the miſeries that
Mat. 24. 19. Lu. 23.29. ſhould ſhortly come on *Judea* and *Jeruſalem*, ſayes, *Wo unto them that are with Child, and to them that give ſuck in thoſe dayes.* And in another Evangeliſt: *Behold the dayes are coming in the which they ſhall ſay, Bleſſed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps that never gave ſuck.* And indeed of all perſons, none more miſerable in the time of War than women with child, or women that give ſuck, becauſe their care is double, and their perſons uncapable of flying and ſhifting for their lives, as thoſe who are ſingle may and do. And of all murthers none more horrible in all
2Kin.8.12. Lam. 5.11: its circumſtances, than *to rip up women with child.* Wherefore, oh my ſoul, let me be thankful to my God, that there is *peace in our borders*, and any quietneſs and ſafety in my habitation, and that I am free from thoſe terrours and affrights, with which many others in a time of common calamity

are

are undone. Oh how many Women, with their unborn infants, have been butchered in many places in ages paſt, and martyred by blood-thirſty Papiſts in theſe latter ages, of which hiſtories are too plentiful! And if there be now any in my condition, in any place, eſpecially among Chriſtians, that is expoſed daily to the rage of a devouring Sword; the Lord be pleaſed either to *reſtrain the Enemy and the Avenger*, or to avenge the cauſe of the murthered, that (according to thy own Law) they may not go unpuniſhed, but may *give life for life*. Yea, *Lord hear the cry of the oppreſſed, and give their adverſaries blood to drink; for they are worthy.* Pſal. 8. 2. Rev. 6. 10.

MEDITATION XI.

My little children, of whom I travel in birth again till Chriſt be formed within you. Where any place is bleſt with a painful Miniſter and Paſtour after Gods own heart, they have in them much of the Apoſtle's temper. For, when I conſider their painful ſtudies, their ſighs and tears, their ſpending their ſpirits in ardent Prayers, and laborious Preaching; their compaſſionate exhortations, and paſſionate ſupplications; and their *giving themſelves wholly to theſe things*; I conclude, that *Surely they have many agonies and conflicts in their hearts for us.* Gal. 4. 19. 1 Tim. 4. 15. Col. 2. 1.

Wherefore, Oh my ſoul, while I carefully expect the hour of my own travel, how much am I to blame, that I ſo little, ſo ſeldom, or never, conſider the travel of my Miniſter's ſoul? Often have I been pricked in conſcience by *his goad and nails*, often wounded by *the ſword of the Spirit*, bruiſed and ſmitten down by *the hammer of the Word*; and ſurely his ſtimulating reproofs, his keen admonitions, and knocking terrours, proceeded from his longing deſire of my converſion. But when he hath, after long ſtriving, been in hopes of my return, how have I, by relapſes, and freſh miſcarriages, *vext his righteous ſoul*, and quencht his new conceived hopes of me? Yea like thoſe inconſtant *Galatians*, I have cauſed him again and again to travel with me in birth. How juſt were it with God to plague me with a tedious, painful, and fruitleſs travel? And to make me read my ſin, and feel its bitterneſs, in ſo ſuitable a puniſhment? But, Oh my God, remit the evils I have committed, work in me what thou haſt required, and compleat in me what thy grace hath begun. Let not the guide of my ſoul labour in vain, but let him ſee of the travel of his ſoul; and let me be among thoſe children, of whom my pious teacher ſhall hereafter ſay, *Lord here am I, and the children which thou haſt given me!* Then alſo ſhall I with more

Eccl. 12. 11.

more confidence expect to have benefit by his prayers for me, when my body is in travel, if God ſhall thus bleſs and anſwer him in his prayers and travel for the new birth of my ſoul.

MEDITATION XII.

I find it frequent in Scripture, that the moſt dreadful judgments on the wicked are thus expreſt, that *Anguiſh ſhall take hold of them as of a woman in travel*, and that *ſudden deſtruction ſhall come upon them as upon a woman in travel, and they ſhall not eſcape.* Wherefore, oh my ſoul, as *Abraham* when he had the promiſe of a child, did preſently intercede (as far as he durſt) in behalf of wicked *Sodom*; ſo let me ever remember to pray for the worſt of men, though perhaps they ſcorn and deſpiſe me and my Prayers. Oh my God, *deal not with them after their ſins*; but cauſe *the wickedneſs of the wicked to come to an end*, that the wicked themſelves may not come to a ſad end. *So perſecute them with thy tempeſt and make them afraid with thy ſtorm, that they may ſeek thy face, O Lord.* And in whatever place or nation thy judgments ſhall enter, yet if there be but *a few righteous perſons* among them, ſpare them from total deſtruction, and let not *thy wrath come upon them to the uttermoſt.*

Pſal. 48. 6. Iſa. 23. 4. Jer. 48. 41. ch. 49. 22. ch. 50. 43.

Gen. 18. 14, 22.

Pſal. 7. 9.

Pſa. 83. 15.

MEDITATION XIII.

John 16. 21, 22. Jer. 6. 24. ch. 22. 23. ch. 30. 6. Iſa. 26. 17, 18. c. 37. 3.

I find alſo that *the ſorrows* of the people of God, when God ſeems to forſake them, *the calamities* of the Church when God is pleaſed to correct them, and *the miſerable diſappointment* of a Church hoping for reformation, and endeavouring in vain for a deliverance from idolatry and oppreſſion, are alſo *expreſſed by the pain and miſery of women in travel.* Now, Oh my ſoul, how' can I but obſerve two things from hence?

The one is, that 'tis ſurely the will of God, that I ſhould not confine my care to the concernments of my private condition, but ſhould labour for a publick Spirit; ſuch as was in that good woman, the wife of *Phineas*, who *was with child and near to be* 1 Sam. 4. 19, 20, 21. *delivered, and when ſhe heard the tidings that the Ark of God was taken, and that her father in law and her husband were dead, ſhe bowed her ſelf and travelled; for her pains came upon her. And about the time of her death, the women that ſtood by her ſaid, Fear not, for thou haſt born a ſon, but ſhe anſwered not, neither did ſhe regard it. And ſhe named the child* Ichabod, *ſaying, The glory is departed from* Iſrael, *becauſe the Ark of God was taken, and becauſe of her father-in-law and her husband. And ſhe ſaid, The glory is departed from* Iſrael, *for the Ark of God is taken.* Bleſſed women, wor-

worthy of everlaſting fame and imitation! She took no comfort in her deliverance though ſhe had a ſon, while the Church of God was not delivered. Oh that the ſame mind might be in me, that I might learn alſo to be more affected with the affairs of the Church! That, if women may not be *common actors* of *publick affairs*, yet we may be *ſpecial mourners for publick miſeries*. Alas; what is my danger to the univerſal danger, my travel to the travel of the Church? What comfort to me to have many Children, except I might *ſee the good of Gods choſen?* What content have I in being delivered from my pains, unleſs *God deliver* Iſrael *from all its troubles?* What delight had *Abraham* in all his mercies, while *he went childleſs*, or I in all my children if the children of God be comfortleſs? Oh *my God, bleſs me out of* Zion, *and thus let me be bleſſed as thoſe are that fear the Lord; let me not only be a fruitful vine, but let me ſee the good of* Jeruſalem *all my dayes; Let me not only ſee my childrens children, but peace upon* Iſrael.

Pſal. 106. 5.

Pſal. 37. 40.

Pſal. 128. 3, 4, 5, 6.

But from the manner of holy Writ to compare almoſt all miſeries, whether inward or outward, whether of good men, or of bad, to the pains of women in travel, as the fitteſt emblem of extream conflicts and agonies, I muſt needs conclude, that *there is no ſorrow like unto that*

ſorrow, and no evil like that ſin that cauſed it; no danger like that danger, and therefore no Saviour like him who can deliver from it. Wherefore, while my life hangs in ſuſpenſe, my ſoul is diſtracted between fear and hope, my mind is appall'd my heart melts, and is even faint, when I conſider that hour of torment approaching. Let me yet further inquire, Oh my ſoul, what duties are yet behind, in order to making my peace with God, and let nothing hinder or divert my preſent religious and heavenly imployment, till I have brought my mind into ſome ſetled poſture, ready to abide whatever ſhall happen.

So much for the duty of Meditation, now to the reſt.

CHAP. VI.

Reſignation to the will of God, The duty of Women with Child.

TO ſubmit and reſign our wills to the will of God in all things, is a moſt deſirable and comfortable temper in any man or woman. 'Tis indeed the ſum of moſt duties, and a compendium of many virtues. He that can *thus receive the Kingdom of God as a little child*, with Self-denyal and humble dependance on our Father in Heaven, he ſhall in time, by thus ſubjecting him-

Mark 10. 15.

himſelf to the Divine will in doing or ſuffering, grow very like the Angels and Saints in Heaven, and ſhall himſelf enjoy that tranquillity and undiſturbed ſerenity, as will be a kind of Heaven upon Earth. The truth whereof will eſpecially appear in this particular caſe of ſuffering any dangerous and painful afflictions. There was nothing more commendable in old *Eli*, than that pious ſentence of his when he heard of the ruine of his houſe, *It is the Lord, let him do what ſeemeth him good.* 1 Sam. 3. 18. There was never more grace expreſſed in fewer words, than in thoſe of our Saviour's, *not my will but thine be done:* Conſidering, that his pangs, agonies, and torments, were a thouſand times greater, than the pains of a woman in travel, yea equal (in ſubſtance) to the pains of Hell. Wherefore be not ſollicitous overmuch for your bodily life, or the life of your child; much leſs ſhould you be too eager in deſiring one of ſuch a ſex: As ſome will wiſh for a Boy, others for a Girle; and that with ſtrange diſcontent at the very thoughts of being diſappointed. But the Example of *Rachel* may be a warning to you all. She made account *to die* with melancholy and ſorrow, *if ſhe had not children*; and ſhe had her deſire, but it coſt her, her life: As you may do well to read in the ſtory it ſelf. So what ſhe longed for, ſhe periſhed by. 'Tis reLuk. 22. 42. Mat. 26. 42. Gen. 30. 1. c. 35 16, 17, 11.

ported of *Agrippina*, *Nero's* Mother, that ſhe prayed, Her ſon might be Emperour. The oracle told her, that if he came to be Emperour, he would kill his Mother; ſhe replyed deſperately, Let him kill me, ſo I may but ſee him Emperour firſt. And the event proved accordingly, *for he cauſed her to be ript up*, that he might ſee the inſide of that womb wherein he firſt lay. 'I 'have read alſo of a woman that took on 'exceſſively, for her child that was like to 'die; and the Miniſter telling her that ſhe 'did very unwiſely, for perhaps the child, 'if it lived, might prove ſo great a croſs 'to her, that ſhe might have cauſe once to 'wiſh, that he had now died. She madly 'anſwered, that, ſo her child might live, 'ſhe did not care though he ſhould hereaf-'ter come to Hanging. Accordingly he 'did live, and was in time for robbery or 'murther *hanged indeed*. This folly would have ſeem'd ridiculous to ſome heathens, who knew not the will and wiſdom of God, ſo clearly as we may. *Plutarch* relates of *Cleobis* and *Biton*, 'That, in the ab-'ſence of the horſes, they drew their Mo-'ther's Chariot to the temple themſelves, 'for which obedient Act of theirs, ſhe 'prayed, that they might be rewarded with 'the greateſt bleſſings that could poſſibly 'happen from God to Man: But ſo it hap-'pened that they were *both found dead in* 'their

O cîdat, modo imperet. Sueton.

'*their beds next morning.* News being 'brought to their Mother of this ſuppoſed 'misfortune, ſhe replied, *I will never account* '*my ſelf unfortunate, in being Mother to ſuch* '*Sons whom God hath inveſted with immortali-*'*ty for their pious and obedient actions.* If a pagan woman had ſo good an eſteem of the providence of an unknown God; how inexcuſable are you, if by a heart of unbelief or ſelf love, you depart from him in your faith, or preſcribe to him in your prayers? How diſhonourable to his wiſdom, and dangerous to your ſelves, is paſſionate importunity for any temporal bleſſing? 'Tis lawful, I confeſs, to pray for life, and ſafe deliverance (as for daily bread:) for *David*, *Hezekiah*, yea Chriſt himſelf did thus petition the Author of life: It being natural to every living creature to deſire the continuation of its own Being. But we muſt moderate our deſires herein, with expreſs reference to Gods good Will; Yea, with that holy indifferency, as to be pleaſed without that gift which it ſhall not pleaſe God to beſtow. (*a*) Seeing (as one ſayes) there is a neceſſity of yielding to Gods Will, becauſe it cannot be reſiſted; and there is equity in ſo doing, becauſe it cannot be better'd. Wherefore, when blind nature which cannot ſee beyond mortality (at leaſt, not ſee far into immortality) ſhall fill you with

Spencers Things new and old, *p.*670.

Engliſh Annot. *on* Gen. 35. 18.

(*a*) Doct. *Gouge* on the Lords prayer. *p.* 94.

with earneſt deſires of longer life; yet let the reverence you owe to the gracious Providence and infallible Word of God (of which I ſhall ſay more in the following Chapters) cauſe you to yield to his Bleſſed Will. Caſt up all events, conſider what may happen, and reſolve, as *David* did,

2 Sam. 15. 25, 26. *If I ſhall find favour in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me again and ſhew me both the Ark and his habitation: But if he thus ſay, Behold I have no delight in thee, behold here am I, let him do to me what ſeemeth good unto him.*

Act. 21. 14. Say with them in the Acts, *the will of the Lord be done.* Say with that good woman '(I 'have ſomewhere read of) who being asked 'in her ſickneſs, whether, if God ſhould re-'ferr it to her *to live or die*, which ſhe would 'chuſe; *I would chooſe neither, but e'en referr 'it to him again.* If God call for the life of your child, yield it up as quietly as *Abraham* did *Iſaac.* If he ſhall call for the life both of you and your child, let your heart be ready to anſwer, *Lord, here am I, and the Child which thou haſt given me.*

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

Dedication of the child to God, The Duty of women with child.

WHen, I ſay, it is your duty to dedicate your child to God before it is born, I do not mean a dedication to ſome office in the houſe of God, as *Hannah* did by *Samuel*, (for I ſuppoſe ſhe did it by ſome prophetical inſtinct equivalent to a Revelation.) *But yet this I muſt needs ſay, in ſhort, That it were, in my judgment, a commendable purpoſe in any parents, poor or rich, that, if their child prove hopeful and ingenious, he ſhall be wholly ſet a-part for the ſervice of God in his Church. It being ſo known a practice among Heathens, Jews, and ancient Chriſtians, if they had any thing of ſingular worth, to dedicate it to God. And our Gentry and Nobility are herein guilty of a moſt irreligious and ignoble practice*; I mean, *to count their ſon and heir, or any of their children, that are well ſhaped, and towardly, above the office of the Miniſtry; as if it would be a perpetual diſhonour to their family, to ſet him a-part for God: But, if there be any of their children miſ-ſhapen, make him a Scholar; and, if he be a Dunce, uſe their intereſt to get him ſome preferment, that requires no employment. Surely, the firſt Author of the Prieſthood, God himſelf,* ap-

appointed it to the firſt-born, as his peculiar honour above the reſt of his brethren; and, for ſpecial provocations againſt God, they loſt it, and it was conferred, by divine favour, on Levi. *And how plentiful are Hiſtories of the ancient practices of many Nations, eſpecially the Romans, in appropriating the office of chief Prieſt to their Kings and Emperours, as an honour not befitting any meaner perſon. Yea, among Chriſtians, the Prince of* Anhalt, *and other perſons of honour, have ambitiouſly accepted, and happily performed, the Miniſterial Office. And no doubt, but one reaſon why the Miniſtry is of no higher eſteem, is, becauſe divers ſelfiſh needy perſons ſeek the Prieſthood meerly for maintenance; and ſo are tempted, by their indigency, to unſuitable courſes, and diſhonourable ſhifts; and are uncapable of being ſo beneficient as they would, or ſhould be; and alſo are the leſs regarded, becauſe extracted from the meaneſt of the people. And, this is alſo the reaſon, why the Nobility and Gentry are more feared than loved, more envied than eſteemed, becauſe they mind their own honour, but not at all the honour of God; they love their eaſe, their pomp, their luſts, and exceſs of riot; but as for the tranquillity or utility of the Church, they are meer Gallio's. Juſt it is with God, that they ſhould be of mean parts and illiterate Ignoramuſſes (as moſt of them are,) ſeeing if they had either parts or learning, they would ſcorn to employ them for the ſervice*

of

of God in his Church. Therefore, till I can hear or imagine any reaſon to the contrary, I ſhall here propoſe it as a thing commendable in any perſon of quality, be they never ſo great, to entertain ſuch thoughts in their minds, of devoting their child to God, as did Hannah. *And the noble and pious* Earl *of* Mancheſter *a Son of his, now at* Cambridge. *And I doubt not, but if any of them, who are leſs mancipated to the common follies, would ceaſe a while to idolize themſelves, and ſuffer reaſon and conſcience to ſpeak, they would conſider better of it.* But this I ſpeak not by commandment. And therefore it is not a Precept, but a Counſel. 2 Cor. 8.8.

Much leſs ſhould any be ſo far beſotted with Popiſh perſwaſions, or Jeſuitical deluſions, as to think a child not dedicated to the Lord, unleſs it be dedicated to a Monaſtick life. Though *Sampſon*, while yet in the womb was appointed to be a Nazarite, yet not by his Parents choice, but by the command of the Angel. Therefore let them only take ſuch a courſe, as have the like warrant. Judg. 13. 5.

Well then, By dedicating it to God, I mean, that which is *the indiſpenſable duty of all Chriſtian parents*, viz. partly in purpoſing, while the child is yet in the womb, that if it ſafely enter into the land of the living, and come to years of maturity, they will uſe all poſſible endeavours, that it

Eph. 6. 5. it may be the Lord's, by *bringing it up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord*; partly by ſerious prayers to God in its behalf, that it may be ſeparated to Him from the womb. Thus, I ſay, ſhould every mother *beg of God, that, as it is mine by nature, ſo it may be thine by grace; that as I have received it from thee, ſo thou wouldſt be pleaſed to accept my dedication of it to thee again.* Some women have ſuch prayers and purpoſes, when their travel fills them with pain, and threatens them with danger; but, if once delivered, they mind them no more. Wherefore, let your duty herein take an earlier date, that it may make better impreſſion in your heart. And aſſure your ſelf, if you thus purpoſe and deſire that your child may be ſet apart for God, and become holy to the Lord, it ſhall be with

2 Sam. 7. 12, 13, 14, 15. you as with *David*; he dedicated much for the Temple, and purpoſed to build an houſe for God; though he lived not to accompliſh his deſire, yet he lived in his ſon, and was bleſſed with a *Solomon*, who did afterwards happily accompliſh it: So, I ſay, Whether you live or not, yet becauſe it is in your heart, as ſoon as ever the child was in your womb, to devote it to the Lord; this is, doubtleſs, *thank worthy with him.* You ſhall be bleſſed in your poſterity,

Pſal. 35. 13. and *your prayers ſhall return into your own boſome.* For either your child ſhall live long

long in the land, and enjoy the fruit of your early prayers, or enter with you into Heaven, where you ſhall enjoy him in glory for ever, having your joy herewith augmented, that God took him ſo ſoon.

CHAP. VIII.

Care of her own health, The duty of a woman with child.

THough care of the body may ſeem to be a matter of ſo ſmall moment, as ſcarce to deſerve a Chapter by it ſelf; yet the truth is, it is a duty of ſo great concernment, that it muſt not be excluded, but diſtinctly conſidered by child-bearing women. Certain we are, that life and health muſt be reckoned among thoſe talents which God doth intruſt them with. Becauſe the health of the body contributes much to perfect all operations of the mind: But women with child have a far greater reaſon to be mindful of their health, *viz.* not only for their own ſakes, but the good of the infant that is yet unborn. If therefore ſome grave Authors have thought it neceſſary, that the Father himſelf ſhould obſerve divers rules of temperance, both in body and mind, if he expect towardly and comely children; How much more requiſite is it, that the mother, who contributes

Charron of Wiſdom.

Magirus Phyſ.

tributes far more to the body and diſpoſition of the child, than the Father (becauſe the child, for many months, receives ſuch nouriſhment as the womb, where it lies, affords; I ſay, how much more doth it concern her) to uſe all poſſible caution and diſcretion, to keep her ſelf in a healthy and well-ordered plight, that ſhe may afford the better nutriment to the fruit of her womb.

Partus ſequitur ventrem.

I queſtion not, but their care herein is as effectual to the ſtrength of their child, as the warmth of the Sun and inriching the ſoil is to any fruit. And as fruit that ripens kindly is gathered the eaſier, and comes off without tearing the branch on which it grows; ſo the child, the more ſtrength it receives from the Mother, as the root, and the more vigorous it grows by all additional helps, the eaſier and ſpeedier will its paſſage into the world be.

Dr. *Gouge* of Domeſt. Duties, *p.* 516.

This is one reaſon (ſay Expoſitors) if not the chief reaſon, why the Angel lays ſo ſtrict a charge upon the wife of *Manoah*, when ſhe was with child with *Sampſon*, to *abſtain from wine and ſtrong drink*, becauſe he was to be a Nazarite, and therefore muſt not have his temper and conſtitution inſected with a natural liking to that, which he was prohibited the uſe of. By which you may perceive, what influence the meat, drink, deſires, and delights of the mother, have

have upon the future diſpoſition of the child. Wherefore learn it as a ſpecial duty, *to forbear all exceſs in meats and drinks, uſe no violent recreations, take no needleſs journies, incumber not your body with much labour, nor your mind with much anxious care, ſorrow, and trouble. Give not way to immoderate paſſion, the vehemency whereof may much diſtemper and endanger you in that condition.* For if by theſe or any other follies, there happen a Miſchance, or the death of both the Mother and the child unborn (as too often it hath happened;) ſurely the blood of the child ſhall be required at their hands, and their own blood alſo ſhall be upon their own heads. Now judge, how much guilt and danger lies upon careleſs and wanton women (who will not obſerve that moderation and prudential care their condition calls for; I ſay, how much ſin and miſery lies upon them) if they periſh by their own negligence and heedleſs irregularity. Of all ſins, none more crying than Murther; of all murthers, none more deſperate than Self-murther; and of all ſelf-murthers, none more deteſtable than to murther her ſelf and child at once: And this, I ſay, they are inexcuſably guilty of, who by any of the courſes abovementioned, or any other courſe, do haſten their own death, and render the birth of their child difficult or impoſſible.

Hoſ. 4. 2. Pſal. 9. 12. Jer. 26. 15. Pſal 51. 14.

CHAP. IX.

Preparation for death, the duty of thoſe women with child, who never yet repented.

THat this muſt not be delayed, I have already ſhewed in the Epiſtle to the Reader, I ſhall now ſhew you how it muſt be performed, (not to inſiſt largely upon this common Theme, which every Funeral Sermon and devotional Treatiſe do preſent us with) conſidering very briefly the heads of ſuch principal duties as may not ſafely be omitted by them that would be at any certainty concerning their future eſtate. If you be unconverted, and have lived in pleaſure, been ignorant, careleſs and impenitent; then conſider, that it is now *high time to awake out of ſleep, and to number your dayes, and conſider your latter end.* You have no peculiar priviledge, that can exempt you from the lot of many others. Be you never ſo great and rich, ſtrong and healthy, have you been the mother of never ſo many children, have you abundance of all things for your conveniency, together with the moſt skilful and famous Midwife; yet neither theſe, nor any other helps, *can deliver you from going down to the pit.* Therefore ſeeing it muſt needs be proper to expect death, let me ask you,

Rom. 13. 11.
Pſ. 90. 11.
Deut. 32. 29.

How

How are you provided for Immortality? what earneſt have you *of any inheritance* in Heaven? If you hope that God will pardon you, and accept you; yet, what *reaſon* can you render *of the hope that is in you?* If, be- 1 Pet. 3. 15.
cauſe he is merciful, then how have you applied your ſelf to him for mercy? Have you conſtantly ſought him, diligently pleaſed him, *&c? For if the righteous ſhall ſcarce-* 1 Pet. 4. 18.
ly be ſaved, where ſhall the ungodly appear? If Luk. 13.
many who ſtrive to enter, ſhall not be able, how 24.
impoſſible then, muſt ſalvation needs be to the negligent? In a word, if Phariſees, Hypocrites, Votaries, and thoſe that have done many good and mighty works ſhall be ſhut out; how much more ſhall they be excluded, that never had either the form or power of godlineſs, that lived in groſs ignorance and prophaneneſs, ſo that *their ſins are* 1 Tim. 5.
open before hand. 24.

Well, you will ſay, *What ſhall we do to be ſaved, and to inherit eternal life?*

I Anſwer, You ſhould firſt look over the ten Commandements, and conſider what ſins are there forbidden, and what duties are there required: For, *by the law comes* Rom. 3.
the knowledge of ſin. If you have ſome brief 20.
Expoſitor by you, it will much help. *I* 1 Joh. 3. 4.
knew one, that when he was at the Univerſity, and had ſerious thoughts of his ways, took Mr. Bifield *his ſix Treatiſes, (a little book of ſmall price, but of excellent uſe) wherein there is ſuch* 2 Cor. 12.
5, 6.

an enumeration of ſins againſt the ſeveral commandments, as deſcends to all particulars, fit to be expreſſed in print, and having in ſeveral ſheets of paper tranſcribed it, and all along inſerted what particular ſins he could remember, (And he found that it brought many ſins to his remembrance, which otherwiſe he had well-nigh forgotten;) ſet apart a day of faſting in ſecret on purpoſe, and there ſpread them before the Lord with mourning and with ſupplication, and found very much comfort therein. Now, thô I preſcribe not this particular courſe to every one; yet, I ſay, a ſerious comparing our lives with the rule of holineſs, is the one thing neceſſary to lay a right foundation of repentance. Well, when you thus have ſpent ſome good time in ſearching and trying your ways, and have diſcovered *greater and greater abominations* in your heart and life; Then ſpend alſo ſome thoughts about the unreaſonableneſs, unprofitableneſs, unthankfulneſs and iniquity of every ſin. Conſider, what wrong ſin does to the honour of Gods Attributes, and of his Law. His Holineſs requires nothing but what is good, his Wiſdom what is fit, and his Mercy what is comely and beneficial for us. Shall we break ſuch a Law, wherein Holineſs, Wiſdom, and Mercy appears? If any thing be difficult, he offers the help of his Grace, to all that bewail their weakneſs. And whatever his Law be, yet ſurely he is our Cre-

Creator; and therefore, by all bonds of Reaſon and Nature, we owe obedience to Him, whoſe we are. Again, conſider the injury done to Chriſt, by piercing him with our Sins, by deſpiſing his Blood (that only and coſtly remedy) and diſhonouring his Name, as if he were not ſufficient to ſave, or as if his Grace gave liberty to Sin. Alſo conſider the perjury every ſinner is guilty of, in violating our Baptiſmal engagement, and making ſlight account of all other renewed ſtipulations we have made to God ſince. What ſhall I ſay of the ſhame and miſchief ſin brings upon us in this life? It deprives us of Gods Image, Favour, and gracious Preſence, robs us of that primitive innocency and righteouſneſs, with which the humane Nature was at firſt dignified above all ſublunary creatures, and degrades us to a condition (in many reſpects) *worſe than that of the Beaſts that periſh*, yea, it makes us children of the Devil, and children of wrath: It fills the creature with vanity, under which it groans and travels in pain; it fills our life with croſſes, our family with troubles, our bodies with diſeaſes, our conſciences with diſquiet. Sin makes travel painful, death dreadful, and hell intolerable; ſo that it is a boundleſs and endleſs evil. And ſhould not ſuch conſiderations as theſe awaken you? May it not trouble you to conſider

Pſal. 49. 12, 20. Eccl. 3. 18.

with your ſelf thus, If I die with all this load of ſin upon me, it will ſurely ſink me deep enough into the burning lake? And alas, if I live till the full time of my Travel come (which is very uncertain) yet how little a while is it before that fatal hour may ſever my ſoul from my body; *My ſoul*, which is inviſible, and therefore leſs minded, while my vile body hath been pampered, and delicately kept; and then I muſt appear before an impartial Judge, whoſe eyes are as flames of fire; and *how*
Heb. 2. 3. *ſhall I eſcape* or endure his ſentence of condemnation, *who have neglected ſo great ſalvation?* Oh Eternity, that amazing word, that aſtoniſhing thing! Who can number the millions of years contained in Eternity? Who can ſpie either bank or bottom in the Ocean of Eternity?

Well, if I were not certain, but had only a ſuſpicion that my ſoul ſhall have eternal recompences, according to its works, yet why ſhould I adventure upon ſin? If there were neither Hell or Heaven, yet ſin is hateful and filthy in it ſelf, and holineſs and righteouſneſs is moſt eligible and amiable for it ſelf. So that, were I never ſo much an infidel, yet reaſon will tell me, that only piety can beget in my mind true tranquility.

But ſurely, my Creator is true, and
Eccleſ. 12. 14. therefore will, in another world, *bring every*

ry work into judgment, and by rewards and puniſhments, vindicate, for ever, that honour of his holineſs, which is ſo little regarded upon earth.

Having, with ſuch things as theſe, brought your mind to conſider of the nature and danger of your ſins, endeavour, in the next place, to ſet your ſelf to weeping, ſupplication, and faſting, (*but ſtill as your weakneſs will bear, for God will have mercy, and not ſacrifice, and therefore an unſeaſonable or intolerable meaſure of religious melancholy, which may endanger your body, is from the devil*, that murtherer) acknowledge your offences, and ſeek the face of God. And be not ſleight or weary in this work, but the more your heart draws back, and the ſooner it would give over, as if you had now done enough, the more ſuſpect your ſelf, and *ſtir up your ſelf* to call upon God. Do not this work by halves, but bring it to ſome good iſſue, and while your heart is in any ſerious temper, and conſcience begins to accuſe, liſten to it, leſt God give you over to final impenitency and unbelief, and then *ſeven worſe devils will enter*, and you will ſoon be ripe for Hell. Wherefore I tell you again, you muſt, upon the ſight of your ſins, bend your knees to the Father of Mercies, flying to Chriſt for refuge, and laying hold upon the horns of the Altar, plead the all-ſufficiency of that

ſacrifice that Chriſt offered; condemning your ſelf again and again, and caſting your ſelf upon the rich and free grace of God in Jeſus Chriſt. Reſolve, with ſerioulneſs and ſincerity, to live in newneſs of life, Gal. 5. 16. and *to walk, not in the fleſh, but in the ſpirit.* And ſeeing of your ſelf you can do nothing exactly and acceptably good *yet (let me tell you, by the way) you may do more than you do, by your own ſtrength and the help of that common aſſiſtance, God hath already given you; and you may forbear many ſins, if you will; as appears by the different carriage of rude ſinners; when they are in civil or religious company, they can keep in their Oaths and Curſes, if they liſt:*

(And therefore do the beſt you may, and blame God of backwardneſs to help you, if you can.)

Seeing, I ſay, your own ſtrength will not reach ſo far, as to change your heart and life, and bring you to be truly holy; therefore improve the Covenant of grace, Ezek. 36. 25,26,27. wherein God doth promiſe *to put a new heart within us*, and *to cauſe us to walk in his ſtatutes*, and beg of him daily *to work in you both to will and to do of his own good pleaſure.* If you thus do, let your travel come when it will, and whatever become of your body, your ſoul cannot miſcarry. If alſo you have wronged any, by ſlander or unrighteous dealing, reſolve to make them

ſpeedy

ſpeedy ſatisfaction. If you have malice againſt any perſon or party whatever, lay it wholly aſide. If you have been wronged by any in your name, or otherwiſe; *forgive them, and ſo will your heavenly Father forgive you.* Mat. 6. 14, 15. But if in any thing there happen a difficulty about reſtitution, reconciliation, *&c.* which you are perplexed about; take the advice of ſome pious and skilful Paſtor, *an interpreter, one of a thouſand, who may ſhew to man his righteouſneſs, and who may guide your feet into the way of peace*; Job 33. 23, 24. and obey their advice ſpeedily. Alſo, if you be yet puzled about the right performance of your ſecret duties, and doubt you have not taken the right way, or that any doubts oppreſs your mind concerning the pardon of your ſins; then caſt your eyes upon ſuch as fear the Lord, (how much ſoever you deſpiſed or hated them before) ſuch as have *mourned in ſecret for your pride*, and have earneſtly longed for your converſion, and are themſelves practitioners in religious retirements: *With them are the ſecrets of the Lord.* Pſal. 25. 14. And therefore unboſome your ſelf to them of ſuch things as are meet to be revealed, and hearken rather to their counſel, than to the diſcouragements of Satan; and get them to entertain you into their company, and to remember you in their ordinary and daily Prayers, or in ſome more ſolemn addreſs to God in your behalf. 1 Cor. 2. 15. Gal. 6. 1.

And

And it is much to be hoped, that the intereſt of theſe favourites in the Court of Heaven, may facilitate your reconciliation, and haſten from God an anſwer of peace. However, if after the uſe of theſe and ſuch other means, inward fears do ſtill remain; yet reſolve, in deſpight of the Tempter, to continue in a way of duty, and patiently wait upon that God for the *joy of his ſalvation* (*a*) who ſo long a time waited for your converſion. The returning Prodigal, though he might take many weary ſteps in his journey home; yet when he draws near his journeys end, his father meets him, receives him, and entertains him with joy. So, though you cannot, in reaſon, expect that God ſhould preſently, upon your repentance, give you aſſurance of pardon, yet let it ſatisfie you, that his Word doth aſſure you: and if you expect any ſenſible joy, he commonly reſerves that beſt wine till the laſt; when you draw nearer to your home in heaven, you ſhall have a clearer ſight of his reconciled face. Wherefore, to end this, be you careful to put on the *Wedding garment* of Holineſs, and whenever you die, you ſhall have undoubted welcome to that perpetual Banquet in the Kingdom of Glory.

(*a*) Pſal. 40. 1. 1 Pet. 3. 20. Pſ. 33. 20. Hoſ. 12. 6. Iſa. 30. 18. Lam. 3. 25, 26.

Mat. 22. 11. Heb. 12. 14. 1 Tim. 2. 15.

Thus I have given a ſhort draught of what I ſhould more largely have inſiſted upon, for the conviction, direction, and con-

Rom. 6. 22.

conſolation of them, who have as yet done nothing, or little to purpoſe in their turning to God. But the intended brevity of this Treatiſe will not permit me to expatiate on every point.

CHAP. X.

Preparation for death, the duty of godly women when with child.

YOU that have taſted the goodneſs of the Lord, and have given up your ſelf to him, muſt, upon this occaſion, ſequeſter your ſelf a while from all the incumbrances of ſecular affairs, and deny your ſelf of the uſual attendance of any company, and *entring into your chamber, ſhut the door*, and give attendance to theſe things.

Commune with thy own heart, and let thy ſpirit make diligent ſearch after thoſe ſecret ſins that yet lurk in thy boſom; rub up thy memory of former ſins (even thoſe committed in the dayes of thy ignorance and vanity) *remember the wormwood and gall*, I mean, how ſin was to thee upon thy firſt converſion; remember thy relapſes any time ſince, into ſins formerly confeſſed and bewailed; and conſider thy unfruitfulneſs and unſuitable returns to God for his rich mercy in Chriſt, how little thou haſt adorned his Goſpel, but rather rendered God-

Pſal. 4. 4. & 77. 6. Lam. 3. 40. Prov. 20. 27.

Godlineſs leſs amiable by thy frequent miſcarriages. In a word, examine thy ſenſes, members, thoughts, and inward parts, of all their ſeveral evils, and renew thy repentance in that ſerious and humble manner the Lord requires.

For your ſins are (in ſome reſpects) more provoking to God, than *the wickedneſs of the wicked.* More diſhonourable to his name, more grievous to his holy Spirit, more diſpleaſing to the good Angels, more advantageous to the evil Angels, more ſcandalous to the world, and more unbeſeeming your principles and heavenly hopes. Therefore, as *David* having ſinned againſt God, wrote many penitential Pſalms, and ſhed many a tear day and night; And *Solomon*, having ſinned foully after God had appeared to him, wrote his recantation, and penitential review of his life, in the Book of *Eccleſiaſtes*; And the woman (after ſhe was pardoned) *waſhed our Saviours feet with her tears*, and ſpent, as hiſtories tell us, many years after bewailing her ſins: So, *go you and do likewiſe*, remembring the holy Apoſtle, who ſometimes ſhames himſelf for the ſins of his unconverted eſtate, ſometimes bewails the remainders of corruption that abode within him.

Recordari volo tranſactas fœditates meas, & carnales corruptiones animi, non quod eas amem, ſed ut amem te, Deus meus, Auguſtin. *in Confeſſ. lib. 2. c. 1.*

And renew alſo your reſolution of better obedience, and more circumſpect walking in

in all manner of converſation. Chide your heart for its deceitfulneſs, charge your ſoul to be more mindful of *the vows of God* that are upon you. Double upon your ſelf all poſſible obligations, to recover what you have loſt, and to ſtir up in you *thoſe things that are ready to die.*

Thus you ſhould perſevere in the work of confeſſion, lamentation, and ſupplication, till you find ſome ſuch anſwerable effect in your heart, as may aſſure you, *that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.* As our books of Martyrs relates of that famous Martyr, Mr. *John Bradford*, that *he could not leave a duty till he had found communion with Chriſt in the duty*, i. e. till he had brought his heart into a more holy frame. He could not leave Confeſſion, till he had found his heart touched, broken, and humbled for ſin; nor Petition, 'till he had found his heart taken with the beauty of the things he deſired; nor could he leave Thankſgiving, till he had found his ſpirit enlarged, and his ſoul quickened in the return of praiſes. (*a*) Like that of *devout Bernard*, who ſaith of himſelf, *that he never went away from God without God.* This is indeed the genius of every Saint, who have known by experience how *good 'tis for them to draw nigh to God.* And you have ſurely found God in the duty, if you find your heart more out of love with your ſelf and the world, more humbled

1 Cor. 15. 58.

(*a*) *Nunquam abs te abſq; te recedo,* Bernard. *Medit.*

bled for ſins paſt, more afraid of every appearance of evil for the future, and more delighting in all thoſe duties, that may promote your graces, and weaken your corruptions in you. But remember, that *the duties of humiliation, confeſſion, ſupplication, muſt be therefore delighted in, becauſe they lead us to God. And, then do we ſerve him aright when we have learned to delight not in our ſervices but in God.* Wherefore raiſe your
Rev. 19.5. heart to that *heavenly frame* of thankful-
Luk. 2.13. neſs, and praiſe to God, for the eternal
Pſal. 33. 1. contrivances of his wiſdom and purpoſes of grace in giving Jeſus Chriſt, for the fulneſs of his promiſes, the freeneſs of his covenant, the ſufficiency of his word, the bleſſed operations of his Spirit, and the transforming power of his grace. Yea,
Pſal. 103. 1, 2, 3. *let all that is within you bleſs his holy name for pardon of ſin; for all other benefits*, whether
Pſal. 139. 14. deliverances from evil, or giving you any
Lev. 15.3. thing that pertains *to life and godlineſs*; for any *good hope through grace of an inheritance*
1 Pet. 1. 3, 4, 5. *incorruptible and undefiled, reſerved in the heavens for you, to which you are kept by the power of God.* And really, when I conſider, that *the whole world lies in wickedneſs*, I cannot but praiſe God in your behalf, *who hath called you out of darkneſs into his marvellous light*, and numbred you among the faithful. The Lord add to your number, and inable you by chearful and thankful ſubmiſſion

to

to *Chriſts eaſie yoke, to ſhew forth his praiſes.*

Another good ſtep towards your preparation for death would be, not only to get a heart truly penitent for ſin, and thankful to God, but alſo *charitable* towards all men, *that is*, to be *of an inoffenſive and courteous diſpoſition to the wicked, affectionate to the godly, and compaſſionate to the needy.* But I mean eſpecially *this laſt*, of having *bowels of mercy* to them that be in want, which *by way of eminency* is commonly called Charity, as *charity* in the Greek is called *grace*; Implying, that there is no grace without charity, no evidence of the truth of our charity without liberality.

1 Cor. 13. 1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 13. Col. 3. 14. 1 Tim. 2. 15. 1 Pet. 4. 8. 2 Pet. 1. 7. Rev. 2. 19.

Now the Apoſtle hath directed us, *To charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor truſt in uncertain riches, but in God; that they be rich in good works, ready to diſtribute, willing to communicate, laying up in ſtore for themſelves a good foundation againſt the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.* Let this full Scripture ſerve inſtead of many. And ſeeing *they that ſow plentifully ſhall reap plentifully*, therefore put it not off till your laſt Will, or till your recovery from Travel; but *while you have opportunity, do good to all, but eſpecially to the houſhold of faith.* Do ſomething for the poor, according as God hath bleſſed you in your eſtate, and as you can

1 Tim. 6. 17, 18.

2 Cor. 9. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10.

can obtain your husbands conſent (unleſs you have a conſiderable allowance at your own diſpoſal;) I ſay, do ſome ſuch eminent
2 Cor. 8. 24. work of charity, as may give *a proof of the truth of your love* to Chriſt, and though it cannot expiate any former ſins (Chriſt only can do that) yet may (in a ſenſe) recompenſe what hath been defective in this kind; and may cauſe the poor, while you
Mat. 10. 41, 42. live, to give you a *diſciple's reward*, and *to bleſs you in the name of the Lord*; and may alſo enable you the better, when, after the reſurrection, you ſhall be examined, whether you *have cloathed the naked and the hun-*
Mat. 25. 35, 36, 37, &c. *gry, viſited the priſoners*, &c. to *give up your account with joy and not with grief.*

In the next place, alienate your heart and affections from all things below Hea-
Heb. 12. 1. ven; *caſt off every weight* of worldly deſires, and begin to part with that in your affections, which you may ſhortly part with in perſon. Look upon all your comforts, as dying comforts; upon your body, as a dying body; upon your houſe and eſtate, as fading vanities, which you muſt ſhortly forſake. Let not your care about any of theſe, take
Lam. 1. 9. up that time, and thoſe thoughts, which you had need at this ſeaſon to imploy otherwiſe. And that you may the more clearly rid your hands of theſe things, *let*
Iſa. 50. 4. *me adviſe you whenever you are with child, if*
Gal. 6. 10. *you have any thing conſiderable of your own to diſ-*

diſpoſe, to make your Will betimes; ſet your houſe in order, and then commit your Relations to the bleſſing of God, and all other things to the pleaſure of his providence. And if there be any thing in your mind, to ſpeak to any whom you love, by way of exhortation, advice, admonition, or reproof; do it ſpeedily, and with all your might. Leave as ſtrict a charge, as you can, upon all that belong to you, to live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godlily. Your laſt words to them, if ſeriouſly and heartily uttered, with prayer to God for his Bleſſing, may ſtick more in their minds, than many a Sermon which they have careleſly heard. When the Patriarchs drew near their end, they gave many grave and pious inſtructions to their Relations; which are therefore left upon record, that thoſe that fear God, might imitate them, that ſo they may *die the death of thoſe righteous perſons, and their latter end be like theirs.* Num. 23. 10.

Our Saviour Himſelf, when he ſaw the hour of his ſufferings to approach, ſpent his time wholly in comforting, teaching, and eſtabliſhing his diſciples, in inſtituting and adminiſtring the Sacrament of his Supper, and in prayer for them, and all his people, to the end of the world. See the 14 15, 16. & 17. cap. of John.

Yea thus the Saints and Martyrs in all ages, have left us innumerable examples of their pious and moving Speeches, when they were going hence. Thus a Candle when 'tis at the laſt point and ready to go out, gives a ſudden

flaſh and a clearer ſhine: So you ſhould endeavour, *that your laſt words may be your beſt words, and your laſt works your beſt works.* Rev. 2.19.

Having thus eaſed your heart, as much as may be, from all other cares, and made this fair progreſs in your preparation, what remains, but that you look Death in the face, ſuffering no day to paſs without ſerious thoughts upon your latter end, that ſo by frequent meditation, you may make death more familiar, and leſs terrible to you. Yea, that by a right underſtanding of the nature of death, you may be *willing to be diſſolved* with *Paul*, and ready to ſay with old *Simeon*, *Now Lord, let thy ſervant depart in peace, for mine eyes have ſeen thy ſalvation.* Luk. 2.29. Wherefore, look upon Death, not as repreſented, to a Sinner, by blind and fearful Nature; but as repreſented in the Scriptures, to a Believer, ſweetned, conquered, and altered by the Death of Chriſt. Well then, Death hath its harbingers, ſickneſs and pain, which are commonly more troubleſome than Death it ſelf. It brings a diſſolution of the frame of Nature, a putrefaction of the Body in a *land of darkneſs*, Job 10.22. a departure of the ſoul into an unknown eſtate in another world. But what is there, in all this, hurtful? All the meſſengers and forerunners of death, which torment and deſtroy our bodies, cannot hinder a Believer from

from rejoycing, and ſaying with *David*, *Thy ſtatutes are my ſongs in the houſe of my pilgrimage.* Pſ. 119. 54
And well may they ſing on their ſick beds, yea, on their death-beds, whom the Lord himſelf doth attend, to *make their beds in their ſickneſs.* Gen. 49. 18.
Old *Jacob*, fainting under a three-fold burthen, of ſickneſs, of age, and the care of his poſterity, refreſheth himſelf by turning to the Lord, and *waiting for his Salvation.* As for the diſſolution of the frame of Nature, it impairs not your bleſſedneſs, nor can cauſe a diſunion from Chriſt. *Nor life, nor death, nor any other thing, can ſeparate us from the love of God, which is in Chriſt Jeſus our Lord.* Rom. 8. 39.

As when Chriſt died, though the comforting influences of his Divine Nature were ſuſpended, or leſs viſible, yet the hypoſtatical Union remained inſeparable. So in our death, the local ſeparation between body and ſoul is not a final diſunion, much leſs can there be a cutting off the myſtical Union of our perſons with Chriſt. Therefore, though wicked men die in themſelves, and die without Chriſt, as they lived out of him; yet the ſervants of God *die in Chriſt*, they *die to the Lord*, yea, *into the Lord*, viz. ſo as to be more nearly joyned to him than before. Rev. 14. 13. 1 Theſ. 4. 14. Rom. 14. 7, 8. Phil. 1. 23.

There is in every member of Chriſt a *divine Nature*, not ſubject to death or diſſo-

lution. Therefore, though as the children of men they die, yet as the children of God they live. Though, as the children of *Adam*, they *return to the earth*; yet, as the members of Chriſt, they *return to God*. And though their bodies die, becauſe ſevered from their ſoul, yet it liveth in death, becauſe it is ſtill joyned to the Lord. *God is the God of Abraham, yet not the God of the dead.* Every Atome, and unknown ſcattered parcel of a believer's duſt, are depoſited in the hands of a faithful Creator. So that though they *be dead, yet their life is hid with Chriſt in God.* And as for the darkneſs and putrefaction of the Grave, it matters not; its putrefaction muſt be, that the garments of our *polluted fleſh* may be changed into one without ſpot. This *Tabernacle*, which our ſins have defiled, like the Leper's houſe, muſt be *pulled down*, that at the day of *the reſtitution of all* 1 Cor. 5. 1. *things*, it may be made a *more glorious body*; Until which day it *reſts* in the Grave, as *in a bed* of ſleep, and finds darkneſs in a dormitory not inconvenient. And though the ſoul depart from all the delights and ſociety of men, and no eye can ſee whither it flies, and into what habitations it enters; though the ſtate of departed ſouls be a myſterie, which reaſon may talk of, but never fully diſcover; yet by Faith we look at *the things that are not ſeen, even the things*

that

that are eternal. We know (ſaith the Apoſtle) *that if our earthly houſe of this tabernable were diſſolved, we have a building of God, a houſe not made with hands eternal in the heavens. Whither I go, ye know,* ſaith Christ, *and the way ye know:* We know that there is a *perfecting of the ſpirits of juſt men,* that there is an *Abrahams Boſom, a Paradiſe, a Right hand of God, and many manſions in our Father's houſe, where they who have believed, do enter into reſt.* 'Tis therefore, our idleneſs of ſpirit, our ſlowneſs of heart to conſider, that makes the ſtate of the dead unknown and undeſirable; and the joyes of the world to come to be, in a manner, fabulous and incredible. But ſurely it would much add to your *peace and joy in believing*, if you would oftner lift up the eyes of your mind to the Heaven of Heavens, and by Faith enter into the *Holy of Holies*, and view the Scituation, Manſions, Treaſures, and Delights of the *heavenly Jeruſalem*; and you ſhall ſoon ſee, that the preſent ſtate of Glory, which you enter into at death (not to ſpeak of that far greater meaſure at the Reſurrection) is ſuch, as may abundantly cure all ſad apprehenſions concerning your departure. What ſhall I ſay of your immunites from all temporal evils, from that *vanity and vexation of ſpirit*, which doth perpetually elude and diſcruciate the mind? Preſent e-

Joh. 14. 4

R. Bolton General Directions, &c. p. 54.

Rom. 5. 13.

vils are innumerable, and future evils are unavoidable: *Sufficient to every day is the evil thereof*, and yet we know not but the morrow may bring forth greater. What a comfort is it to be in a perpetual Ark of ſafety, wherein we may ſwim above all waters? To be taken up out of this *miry pit*, and to be *taken away from the evil to come*, to be out of the reach of helliſh tongues, and bloody hands, (*for the dead know nothing at all*, that is, their ſenſeleſs bodies, and glorified ſouls, know no miſery from all the world can do againſt them. Though the Papiſts accurſe and burn their bones for Hereticks; yet they are not touched with the feeling of any infirmity, the dead neither know, nor care any thing at all, what men do for them or againſt them here upon earth). Alſo, what a bleſſedneſs is it, to be delivered from the temptation of ill company, and the contagion of *the* (*a*) *rotten breath of wicked men*, and *the vexation that is cauſed to every righteous Lot, in ſeeing and hearing them? Wo is me*, ſaith David, *that I ſojourn in Meſech.* Alſo, to be free of Satan's importunate ſuggeſtions; to eſcape him, who is, *in theſe laſt dayes, come down with great wrath, becauſe his time is but ſhort.*

(*a*) σαπρὸς λόγος *Alludit ad poma putrida & male olentia, quæ fœtore nos turbant.* &c. Zanch. in Eph. 4. 29.

Verily, if one knew what oppoſition the hoſt of evil Angels (that fill the regions of the air) do make againſt the free

free aſcent of a gracious ſoul to Heaven; it muſt needs be, that the joy they conceive of their ſafe arrival, by the conduct of good Angels, muſt be very great: This laſt inſtance of Satans mad and malicious endeavours, being freſh in their memories.

But content muſt it needs add, to ſee the Daughter to deſtroy the Mother of Miſchief: I mean, that whereas Sin is the firſt Parent of Death, Death only puts an end to all our ſins. *Sampſon* ſlew many *Philiſtines* in his life, but at his death he ſlew the Lords themſelves. So we may mortifie ſome ſins in our life, but at death we triumph over our Maſter-ſins, yea, All our ſins. Yea, let me yet add, that it is no ſmall part of our gain by Death, to be freed from all laborious Graces and Duties; ſuch as Fear, Hope, Repentance, Watchfulneſs, Self-denial, *&c.* Confeſſion, Humiliation, Praying, Hearing, Receiving Sacraments, *&c.* For all theſe argue Imperfections, Wants, and Corruptions abounding in us. In ſhort, *after death they come to judgment*, have their abſolution from God himſelf, and ſhall ſee all debts croſſed out of *his book of remembrance*, are admitted to *ſit down with Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob*, have fellowſhip with the *innumerable company of Angels*, underſtand the myſteries they now believe; and are with him, *whom having* 1 Pet. 1. 8.

ving before not ſeen, yet they loved, but now rejoyce in him with joy unſpeakable, and full of glory. But all this contains but that preſent ſtate of Glory, which they immediately poſſeſs after death. But at the Reſurrection, when body and ſoul are reunited, the ſentence of Abſolution more publickly pronounced, the wicked condemned, time finiſhed, and their whole perſons admitted to fulneſs of glory and happineſs; then, I ſay, there is a great addition made to their felicity; then their ſouls ſhall no longer cry, *How long, Lord, holy and true,* as they did before, *while their bodies were under corruption, and the Church under perſecution*; But ſhall be fully ſatisfied with the perpetuity of that bleſſedneſs and perfection God hath crowned them with. But I liſt not here to enter into ſo large a field, as the ſtate of Glory after the Reſurrection. Many others have written largely of it: And what I have before ſpoken of the ſtate of departed Souls, preſently after their going hence, does, I think, more properly belong to ſuch conſiderations, as may help to prepare you for death, that you may not *be in bondage with the fear thereof*; but having rightly underſtood it, as now repreſented, may ſay, with more aſſured confidence than wicked *Agag, Surely the bitterneſs of death is paſt.*

CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

To reſolve upon ſome ſpecial Return of thankfulneſs, after their Deliverance, is alſo the duty of Woman with child.

HEre you muſt rightly underſtand, what I do not mean in this direction, as well as what I do mean. Know, therefore, that I do not deſire to draw you into raſh vows, no, nor indeed to any vows at all. *I obſerve it too common among afflicted perſons, perhaps 'tis ſo alſo among women with child, to make many vows, that if ever God deliver them, they will leave ſuch a ſin, abound in ſuch a duty, decline ſuch and ſuch temptations; read ſo much, and ſo often, &c. But I have alſo obſerved, that ſuch vows ſeldom end well. I could relate ſad Inſtances of ſome whom I have known, who, after the commiſſion of ſome foul ſin, have in my preſence, expreſſed as credible ſerious repentance, as ever I could deſire, yea, have, to my ſeeming, been in utter deſpair for the preſent; ſo that I have been not a little troubled to get them to believe, that their ſins were pardonable, and their ſouls not paſt remedy: and when at laſt they began to apprehend any hope, they have upon a ſudden, ere I was aware, made vows, Never more to come near ſuch and ſuch companions, and places of temptation; yea, have alſo ſeconded theſe their vows with immediate earneſt*

neſt prayer to God in ſecret, for his aſſiſtance; And yet have (to my knowledg) riſen from their knees, and gone immediately to the ſame wicked practice, and been as deeply plunged as before, and then been in the ſame trouble again, make the like vows again, and relapſed in like manner again. This, I ſay, I have known, and ſeriouſly conſidering of the matter, I cannot aſſign any other cauſe thereof, than this.

Tilenti ſyntag. diſp. 43. in tertium præceptum, p. 267.

That thoſe vows are unwarrantable, and God would not be intreated to give his bleſſing to that for which he had never given his command.

For though in the Old-Teſtament there is as clear examples of paying Vows, as of offering a Sacrifice: Yet in the New Teſtament, he who commanded his Miniſters *to teach us to obſerve whatſoever he had commanded* (though he is graciouſly pleaſed to condeſcend to many particulars, that might ſeem of leſs concernment, yet) gave no inſtruction to his Apoſtles or Miniſters, to preſcribe making Vows, as a help to holineſs, or a remedy againſt ſin or temptaion. So that, *unleſs it were agreeable to his will, it will hardly conduce to his glory.* Beſides, when we vow any thing, it muſt be either a thing commanded and neceſſary, or uncommanded. To vow to do a thing commanded of God, is needleſs. For his command layes a greater obligation up-

on us already. And if the thing vowed be uncommanded, then it is not neceſſary; and conſequently, it muſt be **dangerous to lay our ſelves under a neceſſity of doing that which our great Law-giver never made neceſſary.**

For this vow of unneceſſary things muſt be either abſolute, or conditional. An abſolute vow layes us under the ſnare of impoſſibilities, yea, under the danger of ſin; a conditional vow carries with it the danger of inconſtancy; *ſuch vows being ſeldom held of much force, becauſe circumſtances may ſo often vary, that they may quickly ſeem diſcharged of their vows.* As for inſtance, Suppoſe you make a vow, If God ſhall recover you, to give ſo much to the poor, to read ſo many Chapters a day, to pray ſo often, or the like. This is an abſolute vow. And now, if Providence render it impoſſible to give ſo much, without great prejudice to your family-neceſſities, or to read or pray ſo often, without danger of your health, or omitting ſome more neceſſary and ſeaſonable good; in this caſe you cannot poſſibly keep your vow without ſin. If your vow be *conditional* to give ſo much, if you can ſpare it; to read and pray ſo much, if you have leiſure and ſtrength: This is needleſſly vowed, for you are already bound by your vow in Baptiſm, and by the common bonds of Religion, to give what

what you can to the poor, and to ſerve God with all your might, and to redeem your time for him. *And 'tis better to do what we do for God, out of conſcientious obedience to his Law, than out of ſuperſtitious obſervation of voluntary vows. For who hath required this at your hands?* The Papiſts do exceed all other Sects in variety of Religious vows, not only abounding in the uſe of them, but in the groſſeſt abuſe, making vows of Continency, regular Obedience, &c. to be meritorious, above all other good works commanded in the moral Law. The very naming of ſuch bold impiety is ſufficient to render it ridiculous to all that have the *Law of God written in their hearts.* Wherefore, to conclude this buſineſs of vows, I ſay with a (*a*) reverend Author ſpeaking of the unhappy vow of Jeptha; *The conſcience ſhall never find peace in any way, but that which we ſee before us, and which we know ſafe both in the kind and circumſtances. There is no comfort in, Peradventure I may pleaſe God.* Therefore be very cautelous of making any vows; and ſeriouſly conſider, and candidly accept *my opinion* herein, that *the ſafeſt way is to let them alone.* But now 'tis time to ſhew you what I do mean by theſe Religious purpoſes;

Perkins *lib.* 2. *c.* 1. *qu.* 2. *page caſ. of conſ.* (*mihi*) 97.

(*a*) B. Hall, *contemplat. lib.* 10. *p.* (*mihi*) 173.

I mean, that you ſhould conſider ſeriouſly how defective you have been, in proſecution-

ſecution of thoſe Religious ends, that the Goſpel and your holy profeſſion doth mind you of, and that you would firmly purpoſe and reſolve with your ſelf, to endeavour to do more for God than yet you have done. As for inſtance, *Suppoſe your reſolutions be, of avoiding ſome evil, or ſome occaſion or appearance of evil, or ſomething that doth hinder that which is good; as to reſolve (ſuppoſing you are by your quality concerned herein) to abridge your ſelf of ſome of your gallantry, to be more frugal in your apparel, and not to be a ſlave to the people of this Generation, nor to follow every ridiculous and apiſh faſhion of this world; To ſpend leſs time in your tedious dreſſing and trimming every morning, and to redeem ſome of it, for the beholding your ſins in the glaſs of the Law, and Chriſt in the glaſs of the Goſpel, that you may trim your ſoul and adorn it after the likeneſs of Chriſt; or to ſpend leſs time and mony in Gaming; or to be more ſeldom in idle viſits, eſpecially of ſuch as will not endure in their company, any talk of God, whether in good ſort or in bad (as the* Jeſuits *once prohibited) but are wholly addicted to ſuch evil communication as corrupts good manners.* Or if you would reſolve upon any thing poſitively good, or praiſe-worthy and of good report, as, *To be more conſtant, frequent, laborious, in your Cloſet-devotions; to be more careful of your family, that it may not be a cage of unclean birds, and a habitation of*

1 Tim. 2. 9, 10.

Exod. 38. 8.

Melius eſt habere malorum odium quàm conſortium. Bern. *de modo benè vivendi. ſerm.* 60.

Prov. 31. 27.

of Devils but a houſhold of faith, wherein all wickedneſs ſhall at leaſt hide its head, and the duties of Religion and Profeſſion of Godlineſs, have more countenance and reputation; or to be more ſevere to your children (I abhor cruelty and paſſionate haſty corrections) I mean to get free of that accurſed fondneſs, whereby ſo many children have been curſes to their Parents on earth, and curſed firebrands in Hell at their death. Remember old Eli, *and be not partaker of his ſins, leſt you be partaker of his plagues. Or if you reſolve, to take more notice of your godly neighbours about you, who are made as the offſcouring of the world, and to make it more manifeſt that your delight is in the Saints, and that you hate them that hate the Lord, yea hate them with perfect hatred and count them your enemies. Or if you would remember who have provoked and offended you, by ſlandring you or otherwiſe, and now ſhew your ſelf courteous and loving, to them eſpecially;* requiting them good *for evil, and never remembring or upbraiding them with their offenſive miſcarriges towards you. Or if you would reſolve to ſpare ſomewhat more from your ſuperfluities* (a) *and ſinful expences, for the preſervation of the lives of many ſtarving poor; and, to that end, alway keep a ſtock by you, to lay out, as occaſion ſhall require, for pious uſes:* (b) *yea if you ſought out objects of your charity, and ſent to ſome of the more modeſt poor, to know, how 'tis with them, that you might buy or make cloaths for the*

(a) *Divitis ſuperflua pauperis ſunt neceſſaria; aliena retinet, qui iſta tenet.* Aug. in Pſ. 147.

(b) R. Boltons Gen. Direct. p. 262. Exod. 25. 35.

the naked, as Dorcas *did, and every good woman, as* Solomon *deſcribes her, ſhould do, and get food for the hungry, phyſick for the ſick, harbour for the deſtitute, imployment for the diligent, &c. This was a motive to* Peter *to raiſe up* Dorcas, *that ſhe had cloathed the poor widows. And this,* ſays one, *was the practice of the bleſſed Virgin, who having great gifts from the three wiſe men,* (a) *that followed the ſtar, yet beſtowed all on the poor, and ſhortly after, at her purification, had but two turtle Doves or two young Pigeons to offer, which was, by Gods appointment, the manner of the poorer* Jews, *who were not able to buy a lamb.* Thus I have given divers inſtances of ſuch particulars as you may make the matter of pious Reſolution. And if in theſe, or any other of like nature, you fix your intentions of abounding more, and growing *more fruitful in every good work*; it will be, doubtleſs, *thank-worthy with God*, if he ſee your heart thus firmly bent to obſerve that precept of his, *Call upon me in the day of trouble, and I will deliver thee and thou ſhalt glorifie me.* How would you glorifie God, when he delivers you? What, by a meer verbal acknowledgment, and not by ſome ſignal teſtimony of your thankfulneſs, and ſome ſuteable return for ſo great a mercy? Wherefore, I ſay again, Reſolve, if God deliver you, to *be more faithful to your principles, more uſeful in your generation, more alive to God,*

Acts 9.36. Prov. 31. 20.

(a) *Suppo-nendum eſt quod illa munera pauperibus erogaverat* N. *Hunap. Patr. Hieroſa. virtutum & vitiorum exempla. cap.* 125. *p.* 166.

Levit. 5.7.

Pſ. 50. 15.

God, more affectionate to Chriſt and his members, more dead to the world, more eminent in ſome particular ſervice to God, whereby you may ſhew forth his praiſe, and acknowledge him in your works, and ſhine with your light before men. And thus having in ſome meaſure diſpatched the duties before mentioned, you may the more boldly addreſs your ſelf to what next follows, *viz.* to exerciſe and ſtrengthen your faith.

CHAP. XII.

To labour for faith in Chriſt, or, if they have faith, to endeavor to exerciſe it, in truſt and dependance upon God for pardon of ſin, is alſo the duty of women with child.

TO *get faith*, and *to get an intereſt in Chriſt*, are great words, and *more commonly ſpoken than underſtood.* Know therefore, that Faith *is not* a believing that I am pardoned, or that I have true grace and ſhall certainly be ſaved; this is not the nature, but fruit, of juſtifying faith. But, *Faith is a believing the Goſpel, which repreſents and offers Chriſt to us, as the only all-ſufficient Saviour; and the receiving him as ſuch.* Faith looks on Chriſt as revealed in his word, to be our Prieſt, Prophet, and King, or *the way, the truth, and the life.* Accordingly it cauſeth us, to renounce our own Righte-

ouſneſs, to renounce our own Reaſon, and to believe all myſteries of godlineſs, *upon his bare Word* (thus becoming fools that we may be wiſe in him;) and to deny our ſelves, and renounce our own wills, and all things that oppoſe themſelves againſt Chriſt, and to make his will our ſupreme rule in all our actions. Thus faith receives Chriſt, with all his benefits, graces, laws; yea with his yoke, croſs, reproach; counting the treaſures of the world as nothing, in compariſon of the *meaneſt and pooreſt* things, that appertain to Chriſt, and have his name upon them. So that they who thus receive Chriſt, believe in him, and are juſtified by him, yield to Chriſt the *chief intereſt in all* that is theirs; in their underſtanding by believing him, in their affections by loving him, in their wills by obeying him, in their time, ſtrength, eſtate, and all things they are or have, by ſerving him with their whole heart, their whole ſoul, and their whole ſtrength, all their days. *And ſuch have doubtleſs an intereſt in Chriſt!* Wherefore if you doubt, complain, and torment your ſelf with ſuch inward fears as would all be removed, *if you once knew that you believed, and had an intereſt in Chriſt*; then ſtir up your ſelf, now to receive him as he is offered, be willing to be ſaved by him in his own way, let his intereſt prevail in you above all other intereſts:

and you ſhall find that, *faithful and obedient compliance with him, will ſooner bring comfort than meer complaints.* Be not then *ſlothful in this buſineſs, but fervent in ſpirit, ſeeking the Lord,* for increaſe of faith and help againſt your infidelity. Do not *by a heart of unbelief depart* in the leaſt, from him, upon any terms; but *lay aſide every ſin that hath eaſily beſet you,* (elſe your complaints are not in earneſt;) patiently perſevere in well doing, and in a way of holineſs accept comfort. (Yet look not preſently and too eagerly for a high meaſure of ſenſible joy and aſſurance; for that is *ſcarce a promiſed mercy, given to a few who are moſt eminently holy, and with them it doth not alwayes abide neither.*) And if you are wholly without joy or peace in thus believing, you are *not ſtreightned in God, but in your ſelf,* becauſe you either retain ſome ſin, which grieves the Spirit, or liſten to temptations, or cheriſh your fears, and refuſe to be comforted. Wherefore, for your further help conſider, the freeneſs, fulneſs, ſuitableneſs, and multitude of thoſe *exceeding great* and *precious Promiſes, whereby you have all things that pertain to life and godlineſs*; promiſes of pardon, and promiſes of deliverance; promiſes to your ſoul, and to your body; promiſes of all needful good, and *of all things working together for good* in this life; and promiſes of all good, in the enjoyment

joyment of God who is the chief good, and that with life everlaſting. Search then the Scriptures, peruſe your Charter, read the laſt Will and Teſtament of Jeſus Chriſt, and pick out, and obſerve ſuch promiſes, as will ſufficienly reach you, in this or any condition imaginable. In ſo great variety, as the ſtore-houſe of Scripture affords, I ſhall ſet only ſome few before your eyes.

Promiſes of pardon of ſin.

Let the wicked forſake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughs, and let him return unto the Lord, for he will have mercy upon him, and to our God for he will abundantly pardon. Iſa. 57. 7.

I will cleanſe them from all their iniquities, and I will pardon all their iziquities, whereby they have tranſgreſſed, and whereby they have ſinned againſt me. Ezek. 37. 23.

I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy tranſgreſſions for my own ſake, and I will not remember thy ſins. Iſa. 43. 25.

Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and paſſeth by the tranſgreſſion of the remnant of his heritage? Micah. 7. 18.

I will be merciful to their unrighteouſneſs, and their ſins and iniquities will I remember no more. Heb. 8. 12.

Be it known unto you all, men and brethren, that through this man, is preached unto you forgiveneſs of ſins. Act. 13. 38.

Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavie laden, and I will give you reſt. Mat. 11. 28.

Iſa. 53. 4, 5. *Surely he hath born our griefs, and carried our ſorrows. He was wounded for our tranſgreſſions, he was bruiſed for our iniquities, the chaſtiſement of our peace was upon him, and with his ſtripes we are healed.*

All we, like ſheep, have gone aſtray, we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

He was numbred with the tranſgreſſors, and he bare the ſin of many, and made interceſſion for the tranſgreſſors.

Act. 10. 43. *To him give all the Prophets witneſs, that through his name, whoſoever believeth in him ſhall receive remiſſion of ſins.*

Act. 13. 39. *And by him, all that believe are juſtified from all things, from which ye could not be juſtified by the Law of* Moſes.

Rom. 3. 25. *We are juſtified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jeſus Chriſt: Whom God hath ſet forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteouſneſs for remiſſion of ſins that are paſt.*

Many other places of this nature you may turn to at your leiſure. As, *Iſa.* 33.24. *Mat.* 12.31. *James* 5.15. *Pſal.* 130. 4. *Dan.* 9.9. *Exod.* 34.7. *Luke* 1.77. *Luke* 24.47. *Mat.* 26.28. *John* 20.23. *Rom.* 4.25. *Rom.* 5.16, 18. *Rom.* 8. 33.

And if you think your ſins greater than ordinary, yet be not ſo weak, as to count that any *bar or impediment to ſaving grace.*

To

To Omnipotency there is nothing great, nothing difficult; to infinite Love nothing is troubleſome, or can be a hinderance. God, who commands us to forgive *till ſeventy times ſeven*, can as eaſily forgive a *thouſand talents as a hundred pence*. What is our Bucket to his Ocean? If you give your hope and your ſoul for loſt, yet *He came to ſeek and to ſave that which is loſt*. He delighted to cure the more deſperate diſeaſes, when he was upon earth. And he uſually healed body and ſoul together, and told them, that their *ſins were forgiven them*, as well as that they ſhould *ariſe and walk*. Many of thoſe ſinners that Chriſt ſhewed mercy to, were moſt infamous, and, to mens ſeeming, as unlikely to have been ſaved, as any of that generation. What think you of *Mary Magdalene*, out of whom our Saviour *caſt ſeven devils?* And of that woman that *waſhed his feet with her tears?* Who, though a notorious known *ſinner* (*an harlot*) yet had all her ſins forgiven her, and our Saviour largely defending and explaining the freeneſs of his grace to her? What of the *woman taken in adultery*, whom our Saviour did not condemn, but, with charge to *ſin no more*, diſmiſſed her in peace? What think you of the Apoſtle himſelf, who thus ſpeaks? *For we our ſelves were ſometime fooliſh and diſobedient, deceived, ſerving divers luſts and pleaſures, living in malice and envy, hateful*

Luke 19. 10.

Luke 2. 8.

Luk. 7. 37 38, 39, &c.

John 8. 10, 11.

Titus 3, 3. 4, 5, 7.

and hating one another. But after that the kindneſs and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared; not by works of righteouſneſs, which we have done, but according to his mercy he ſaved us. That being juſtified by his grace, we ſhould be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. What of *Peter*, and the converted Jews, who had *walked in laſciviouſneſs, luſts, exceſs of wine, revellings, banquettings, and abominable idolatries*; and *in the former luſts in their ignorance*; yet of ſuch ſinners he ſayes, *Bleſſed be the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again to a lively hope, by the reſurrection of Chriſt from the dead.* It were endleſs to heap up all examples in this kind. You ſhall do well to ſee what the *Colloſſians* were, when they *lived and walked in fornication, uncleanneſs, covetouſneſs, &c.* The *Corinthians*, who were *Fornicators, Idolaters, Sodomites, Thieves, Drunkards, &c.* yet now are *waſhed, ſanctified, juſtified in the name of the Lord Jeſus, and by the Spirit of our God.* And was it for their ſakes only, that God ſhewed mercy to them? No: But alſo to encourage us, when heavy laden with ſin, to expect the like. For ſo the Apoſtle, more than once, doth aſſure us. As when he ſpeaks of the *Epheſians*, and himſelf, and all believers, that in times paſt they were over-ruled by the Devil, and the world,

1 Pet. 4. 3.

1 Pet. 1. 3, 4, &c.

Col. 3. 5, 6, 7.

1 Cor. 5. 9, 10, 11.

Eph. 2. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, &c.

and

and their own luſts, *fulfilling the deſires of the fleſh, and of the mind: But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love, wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in ſins, hath quickned us together with Chriſt (by grace ye are ſaved) and hath raiſed us up together, and made us ſit together in heavenly places, in Chriſt Jeſus:* That in the ages to come *he might ſhew the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindneſs towards us through Jeſus Chriſt.* To the ſame purpoſe is that other excellent paſſage of his; *This is a faithful ſaying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Chriſt Jeſus came into the world to ſave ſinners, whereof I am chief. Howbeit, for this cauſe I obtained mercy, that in me firſt, Jeſus Chriſt might ſhew forth all long-ſuffering, for a pattern to them which ſhould hereafter believe on him to life everlaſting.* 1 Tim. 1. 15, 16.

To conclude this, I ſhall only add the obſervation of a bleſſed Author. *In the Genealogie of Chriſt there are but four women mentioned, and they are all branded with a mark of infamy in Scripture-ſtory. The firſt is* Thamar, *Mat.* 1.3. *ſhe was inceſtuous, for ſhe lay with her father-in-law,* Gen. 38.38. 2. Rahab *an Harlot,* Heb. 11.31. 3. Ruth, *who came of* Moab *the ſon of* Levi, *by inceſt with his own daughter;* Gen. 19.37. 4. Bathſheba, *and ſhe was guilty of Adultery.* Why is all this, but to ſhew that free grace is no reſpecter of perſons, except it be to have Mr. *Love* his *Zealous Chriſtian.*

moſt tender regard to the moſt miſerable object, and to pardon thoſe moſt readily, who ſee themſelves moſt guilty; and to waſh them as white as ſnow, whoſe ſins were of a ſcarlet dye. And for your further increaſe of faith, I would adviſe you, **if you can conveniently have it, in Gods own way, that you would, with all humility, and earneſt deſires of favour with God,** Job 6. 53, 54, 55, 56. **go to the Sacrament of the Lords Supper**, the *Communion of the Body and Blood of Chriſt*, where you may ſee Chriſt crucified for you, and may receive ſuch ſymbols and pledges of his good-will towards you, as will be ſo many *Seals* to his Promiſes; and there you ſhall find *his fleſh* to be *meat indeed*, and *his blood drink indeed*. He is the living *bread*, which ſhall *ſtrengthen your heart*, and his love is ſtronger than *wine*, and ſhall *make glad your heart*. *I doubt, that the ſeldome or careleſs uſe of this bleſſed ordinance is one great cauſe why ſo many Chriſtians are of weak faith. And if, with other endeavours and inquiries for comfort, this were more frequently and rightly uſed, we ſhould find their ſtrangeneſs from God* (which is the chief cauſe of their fears) *to ceaſe; and delight in him, and love to him, and conſequently, peace of conſcience to increaſe, by this nearer converſe and communion with him.* Mary Magdalene, *as they ſay, being near her end, came and received the Body and Blood of our Lord in the*

place

place of their Chriſtian aſſembly, and there comfortably exſpired before the Table of the Lord.

Alſo peruſe *Davids Pſalms*, and, as you eaſily may, take notice of thoſe eſpecially, that contain complaints of Sin, Fear, Calamities, and alſo praiſes to God for hearing and delivering, and promiſes of the like mercy of God to all his people in their ſeveral exigences.

And, **Sing theſe Pſalms leiſurely and conſiderately alone by your ſelf. You will find the voice to quicken your meditation upon the matter, the matter to affect your heart, and the bleſſing of God to attend his own ordinance, who hath commanded us to admoniſh our ſelves (*a*) in Pſalms, and Hymns, and ſpiritual Songs.** Beſides, **It is moſt unqueſtionably pleaſant to thoſe good Angels, who are miniſtring Spirits to attend you for good.** (*a*) Eph. 5. 19.

But if you are not ſatisfied, by Promiſes, Sacraments, Pſalms, *&c.* then look beyond all theſe, to *the Goodneſs of God*, which is infinite. His goodneſs is the fountain of the Promiſes, and *therefore it is, that the ſtreams make glad the people of God.* Now it is an acceptable work of Faith, if we cannot ſee a Promiſe ſpeaking directly to us, or are not able to apply them; yet even then to caſt our ſelves upon infinite

good-

Iſa. 50.10. goodneſs, *to truſt in the name of the Lord,*
Pſal.9.10. *and to ſtay our ſelves upon our God.* For his Goodneſs contains more in it, than Promiſes do expreſs. It never entred into the tongues of Men or Angels, fully to expreſs the *heighth, and depth, and length, and breadth thereof.* Let this, therefore, keep you in a dutiful and quiet expectation of comfort, that there *is mercy with God,* an inexhauſtible treaſure of mercy, *riches of grace*; an overflowing fulneſs, which can as well ceaſe to be, as to be faithful and
Iſa. 57.19. compaſſionate, in *dwelling with the contrite and humble heart, to revive the hearts of the humble, and to revive the ſpirits of the contrite ones.*

CHAP. XIII.

Truſting in the Lord for deliverance, The duty of women with child.

THough truſting in God exclude not the uſe of means, and Gods providence over us doth not diſcharge us from proviſion for our ſelves, and preventing what we can of the danger and hurt of any approaching evil; yet it ſurely excludes our truſt in any thing beſides him. And therefore, whatever eſtate, friends, helps, ſtrength, you have; yet truſt not to theſe. For God only *brings to the birth, and gives*

ſtrength

ſtrength to bring forth. *Rachel*'s Midwife could bid her be of good comfort, but ſhe could not give her the comfort of a happy deliverance. *Miſerable comforters* are Midwives, Neighbours, and Kindred, if God withhold the fruit of the womb. And if he ſpeak the word (after others have tormented the labouring woman, and tyred themſelves with fruitleſs endeavours, and at laſt given over any hopes of ſucceſs) I ſay, if he ſpeak the word, ſhe ſhall ſoon be delivered; for, *He ſhutteth and none can open, he openeth and none can ſhut; he letteth and none can work, he worketh and none can let.* He can let out the impriſoned infant, raiſe up the fainting mother; bring ſtrength out of weakneſs, and life out of death. Wherefore, furniſhing your ſelf with ſuch promiſes as he hath made to his people in all their extremitries, ſtrengthen your faith, hope in the Lord, and *quietly wait for his ſalvation.*

Among the many promiſes of this kind, I ſhall mention a few which are obvious, and leave you to obſerve the reſt in your own private reading.

His anger endureth but a moment: In his favour is life: Weeping may endure for a night but joy cometh in the morning. Pſ. 30. 5.

For I will not contend for ever, neither will I Iſa. 57. 16.

be

be alwayes wroth: For the ſpirit ſhould fail
Pſal. 103. *before me, and the ſouls which I have made.*
15. *Like as a father pitieth his children, ſo the Lord pitieth them that fear him: For he knoweth our frame, he remembreth that we are but duſt.*
Iſa. 27. 9. *By this therefore ſhall the iniquity of Jacob be purged, and this is all the fruit to take away his ſin.*
1 Cor. 11. 32. *When we are judged, we are chaſtened of the Lord, that we ſhould not be condemned with the world.*
2 Cor. 4. 17. *For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.*
Job 15. 8. *He maketh ſore, and he bindeth up: He woundeth, and his hands make whole.*
Ver. 19. *He ſhall deliver thee in ſix troubles, yea in ſeven there ſhall no evil touch thee.*
Pſ. 33. 18. *Behold, the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear him, upon them that hope in his mercy: To deliver their ſoul from death, and to keep them alive in famine.*
Pſ. 33. 17. *The righteous cry, and the Lord heareth them, and delivereth them out of all their troubles.*
Pſ. 46. 1. *God is our refuge and ſtrength, a very preſent help in trouble.*
Iſa. 41. 10. *Fear thou not, for I am with thee, be not diſmayed, for I am thy God; I will ſtrengthen thee, yea, I will help thee, yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteouſneſs.*

For

For God hath comforted his people, and will have mercy upon his afflicted. But Zion ſaid, The Lord hath forſaken me, and my God hath forgotten me. Can a woman forget her ſucking child, that ſhe ſhould not have compaſſion on the ſon of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will not I forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands, &c. Iſa. 49. 14.

Becauſe he hath ſet his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him. I will ſet him on high, becauſe he hath known my name. He ſhall call upon me, and I will anſwer him. Pſal. 91. 14, 15.

Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whoſe mind is ſtayed on thee, becauſe he truſteth in thee. Iſa. 26. 3.

Caſt thy burthen upon the Lord, and he ſhall ſuſtain thee. Pſ. 55. 22.

Truly, my ſoul waiteth upon God: From him cometh my ſalvation. Pſ. 62. 1.

My ſoul, wait thou only upon God: For my expectation is from him.

With many other like places. Now what can we expect for higher aſſurance, than ſuch re-iterated promiſes of that God, with whom *it is impoſſible to lie*. *David*, therefore, who was (more than ordinary) experienced in variety of afflictions, and the comforting power of the Word under them, tells us, *I had fainted, unleſs I had believed, to ſee the goodneſs of the Lord in the land of the living*. And thus plead with God,

God, *Remember thy Word unto thy ſervant, upon which thou haſt cauſed me to hope.* And again, *This is my comfort in mine affliction, for thy word hath quickned me.*

Let me here crave leave to tranſcribe a few ſweet paſſages out of an excellent Author, than whom none hath written more judiciouſly, piouſly, and plainly, in our Engliſh tongue.

[a] Mr. *Ball's* Treat. of Faith. part 2. c. 7. p. 318.

(*a*) The godly are allowed to live by Faith in times of affliction, when calamities of all ſorts compaſs them about. For, *Godlineſs hath the promiſe of this life, and that which is to come.* 1 Tim. 4. 8. God hath promiſed, that *all things ſhall work together for good, to them that love him,* Rom. 8. 28. and that *he will not ſuffer us to be tempted above what we are able.* 1 Cor. 10. 13. And it is our duty to believe God, that it ſhall be even as he hath told us. Act. 27. 25. The godly have had this confidence in former times, whoſe practice is both a token of our priviledge, and a pattern of our duty. *What time I am afraid, I will truſt in thee.* Pſa. 56. 3. *Though I walk through the valley of the ſhadow of death, I will fear no evil. For thou art with me; thy rod and thy ſtaff they comfort me.* Pſa. 23. 4. God is hereby much glorified, that we rely upon him as our *rock of defence,* all-ſufficient Saviour, and ſureſt friend, in time of diſtreſs. It being one of his moſt royal titles, to be *a refuge for the oppreſſed, a help to the poor, ſtrength to the needy, &c.* Pſa. 68. 3. & 9. 9. & 10. 14. And *therefore will*

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the Lord wait, that he may be gracious unto you; and therefore will be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you. Iſa. 25. 4. & 30. 18.

Confidence in God doth the more bind and oblige him, as it were, to do us good. *Pſal.* 37. 40. If a friend rely upon our faithful promiſe, we take our ſelves bound, not to fruſtrate his expectation at a dead lift. The Lord will never leave the ſoul deſtitute which truſts in him. The faithful have promiſed themſelves help, becauſe they truſted in the Lord, *Pſal.* 57. 1. & 143. 8, 9. And to hope in God, and to have God for our help, are linked together in Scripture. *Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whoſe hope is in the Lord his God.* Pſ. 146. 5. After ſerious humiliation of the ſoul, Faith brings tidings, that God will look down from Heaven in mercy, and bring help in fitteſt ſeaſon. *If their uncircumciſed hearts be humbled, and they accept of the puniſhment of their iniquity, then will I remember my covenant with Jacob*, &c. Deut. 4. 22, 31, 32. *When I fall I ſhall riſe, when I ſit in darkneſs the Lord ſhall be a light unto me.* Mich. 7. 8, 9.

This dependance on the Promiſes, which Faith worketh, is abſolute, without limitation of time, meaſure of affliction, or manner of deliverance. All theſe it referreth to the good pleaſure of his Will, and repoſeth it ſelf ſecurely on his faithful Word and Providence. Fear rides poſt to out-

out-run Danger, and Folly would ſoon diſpatch our mourning part, to be in the houſe of laughter: But he that believeth, maketh not haſte; knowing that God's truth never faileth. His wiſdom chuſeth the fitteſt means and ſeaſon, and his Compaſſion is readieſt, when, to ſenſe and reaſon, it is furtheſt off. Thus he.

But ſeeing theſe Promiſes forementioned are general, and you would willingly ſee (perhaps) ſomething more expreſly fitted to your own condition; therefore I ſhall ſubjoyn a few other Scriptures, which may abundantly ſatisfie in this caſe.

Iſa 46. 3, 4. *Hearken unto me, O houſe of Jacob, and all the remnant of the houſe of Iſrael, which are born by me from the belly, which are carried from the womb. And even to your old age I am he, and even to hoary hairs will I carry you, and will deliver you.*

Luke 1. 13, 14. *Fear not Zacharias, for thy prayer is heard, and thy wife Elizabeth ſhall bear thee a ſon, and thou ſhalt have joy and gladneſs, and many ſhall rejoyce at his birth.*

John 16. 21. *A woman, when ſhe is in travel, hath ſorrow, becauſe her hour is come; but as ſoon as ſhe is delivered of a child, ſhe remembreth no more the anguiſh, for joy that a man is born into the world.*

Heb. 11. 11. *Through faith in him that promiſed, Sarah received ſtrength to conceive and to bring forth. Notwithſtanding ſhe ſhall be ſaved in child-bearing,*

bearing, if they continue in the faith, and charity, and holineſs, with ſobriety. This laſt place is moſt full and remarkable: For the Apoſtle had ſaid immediately before, that *the woman was firſt in the tranſgreſſion.* Now this tranſgreſſion deſerved all miſery, pain, and torment, both here and hereafter, without any hope of end or deliverance: But ſee the goodneſs and mercy of our God! Saith he, *notwithſtanding her ſin*, God will ſave her; *notwithſtanding the curſe*, God will bleſs her. For the curſe that came upon women at firſt, is wonderfully moderated, and the vigour thereof abated, even from the firſt denunciation thereof. Though God had newly curſed the earth, yet *he had reſpect to Abel and his offering.* Though he curſed man, yet it is not an only curſe, but a command, and is a bleſſing annext, *In the ſweat of thy face ſhalt thou eat thy bread.* Here is indeed *a curſe*, that their labour ſhould be wearieſome; but a *command*, that they ſhould labour; and *a promiſe*, that in ſo doing, they ſhould have bread to eat. So, I ſay, is the curſe upon women, *I will greatly multiply thy ſorrow and thy conception: In ſorrow ſhalt thou bring forth.* This ſorrow and pain is the *Curſe*; but it is preſently ſweetned with a promiſe of bringing forth. So that, notwithſtanding the danger of this Curſe, *Eve* was (through Mercy) the Mother of many

1 Tim 2. 15.

Children; and *notwithſtanding* you all inherit the ſame *curſe*, yet you are capable of the ſame *bleſſing*. And, in a word, if you continue in *Faith*, *Charity*, *Holineſs*, *and Sobriety*, you ſhall find, that though you are a daughter of *Eve*, yet *you ſhall be ſaved*.

(*a*) B. *Hall*, Cont. *lib.* 10. *p.* 186.

To which purpoſe, a Reverend Author (*a*) hath theſe words. 'Afflictions have 'this advantage, that they occaſion God 'to ſhew that mercy to us, whereof the 'proſperous are uncapable. It would not 'beſeem a Mother to be ſo indulgent to a 'healthful Child, as to a ſick. It was to '*Manaoh*'s wife that the Angel appeared, 'not to her husband——for that the birth 'of the child would coſt her more dear than 'her husband.——As Satan layes his batte'ries ever to the weakeſt; ſo, contrarily, 'God addreſſeth his comforts to thoſe 'hearts, that have moſt need; As at the 'firſt, becauſe *Eve* had moſt reaſon to be 'dejected, for that her ſin had drawn Man 'into the tranſgreſſion, therefore the Cor'dial of God moſt reſpecteth her; The 'ſeed of the woman ſhall break the Ser'pents head. *Thus far he.* And ſurely we cannot imagine any *higher reaſon*, why God ſuffered the firſt ſin to be, and to bring ſo much ſin and miſery upon us; but that, the more miſerable we are, the more would the glory of his grace appear, in pardoning and

and ſaving us in the ſecond *Adam*. And why would God have ſuffered ſin to bring ſuch pain and danger upon women in travel, but *'twas his will, that there ſhould ever be, while the world ſtands, that moſt eminent object and inſtance of his delivering power*. For thus it hath pleaſed our Supreme Ruler and Creator, that his ſervants ſhould be brought low, that he may then help them. Of this we have plentiful experiments in his providences towards men and women. And if you would be armed againſt deſpondency, and have your truſt and hope in God confirmed, you muſt make great reckoning of thoſe happy experiences of Gods ſeaſonable help, which he hath at any time vouchſafed to you or others. *If ſo be that you have taſted, that the Lord is gracious, that he hath heard your voice and your ſupplication*, what ſhould hinder you from expecting the ſame mercy from him, when you are in the like need, if he ſee it to be for your good? You cannot but know, that many ſinful, weak, helpleſs women, have been delivered *even without means*, have been raiſed up *from the gates of death*, been *ſatisfied with long life*, and have *ſeen their childrens children. Whoſo is wiſe and will obſerve theſe things, even they ſhall underſtand the loving kindneſs of the Lord.* 1 Pet. 2. 3. Pſal. 107. 43.

Tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope. If we have Rom. 5. 4

learned patience under former tribulations, and had experience of Gods remembring mercy in judgment, this ſhould produce hope in us of the like help from him for the future.

Ri. Rogers 7 treatiſes ch. 18. treat. 4. p. 518. What other thing made the Apoſtle in great afflictions to ſtay himſelf upon God, and caſt his care on him, but this experience and long proof he had of Gods tender

2Cor.1.10 care over him. *Who delivered us from ſo great a death, and doth deliver us, in whom we*

2 Tim. 6. 17, 18. *truſt that he will yet deliver us.* And again, *I was delivered out of the mouth of the Lyon, and the Lord ſhall deliver me from every evil work, and will preſerve me to his heavenly Kingdom.*

2 Sam. 17. 36, 37. Yea, long before him, we find *David* thus reaſoning, *The Lord, that delivered me out of the paw of the Lyon and the paw of the Bear, will deliver me out of the hand of this*

Pſal.63.7. *Philiſtine.* And again, *Becauſe thou haſt been my help, therefore in the ſhadow of thy wings will I rejoyce.*

Pſal. 22. 4, 5. *Our Fathers truſted in thee, they truſted and thou didſt diliver them: They cried unto thee and were delivered, they truſted in thee & were not confounded.* Many ſuch excellent paſ-

Pſal. 30. 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12. ſages to this purpoſe you may obſerve in other places, eſpecially in the Pialms, *as you may ſee in the places quoted in the margin.*

Pial. 31. 7, & verſ. 22, 23, 24. And 'tis obſervable, that *David* makes his own experiences a ground for others confidence. As doth alſo the Apoſtle, when

he

he quotes that promiſe made to *Joſhuah*, and applies it to every believer, *He hath ſaid, I will never leave thee nor forſake thee. So that we may boldly ſay, The Lord is my helper.* And ſo St. *James*; Becauſe *Elias* (who was a man ſubject *to like paſſions as we are*,) was heard for rain, and again for dry weather; therefore all Chriſtians may expect much benefit in their ſickneſs, from the prayers of the faithful.

The like paſſages in the 32, 33, and 34 Pſalms. Joſh. 1. 5. Heb. 13 5, 6.

Wherefore ſeeing *Eve*, the firſt Author of your infirmities, and *Sarah*, *Rebeccah*, *Hannah*, *Ruth*, and all others recorded in Scripture, were women of *like paſſions and infirmities with you*; and many of your neighbours, who are as great, (if not greater) ſinners than your ſelf, have this uſual benefit of Gods delivering power and mercy, therefore you may undoubtedly conclude, and *boldly ſay, The Lord is my helper.*

Conſider alſo that God, who is *over all, in all, and through all*, extends his care herein to all his creatures. *There is nothing ſo difficult but 'tis under his power, nothing ſo ſmall but 'tis under his care.* His providence watcheth over the Fowls of the air, and the Beaſts of the field, in producing their young. And there is *no more clearer argument, that there is a providence of God over all the world, than the conſervation of the Species and kinds of all creatures in a continual ſucceſſion.* Iniomuch that we find a ſpecial

expreſs law in the behalf of Birds in the time of their incubation, that *while the Dam was ſitting upon her eggs or young ones, ſhe muſt not be taken, but let go free*; and this with a ſevere charge, and promiſe of much good upon the obſervation of it. And wherefore is ſuch mention made of the *Oſtrich* by the Lord himſelf, *which leaveth her eggs in the earth*, and takes no farther care of them, contrary to the nature of all other Birds, but expoſes them in the warm ſand to the benefit of the Sun to hatch them; I ſay, Why is this mentioned, but to intimate the power and care of God, who delivers their eggs and young ones from being cruſhed, and cauſes thoſe Birds ſtill to increaſe and multiply. Again, we find that God hath a care of the Beaſts, in this condition. Therefore he promiſed the *Iſraelites, that among their cattel none ſhould be barren or caſt their young*. And though (ſometimes) *the voice of the Lord maketh the Hinds to calve*; that is, Terrible claps of thunder cauſe ſome beaſts to caſt their young ſooner than ordinary; Yet his providence doth generally watch over every beaſt of the forreſt, to cauſe them to bring forth their fruit in ſeaſon, and *to caſt out their ſorrows*; even *the wild goats of the rock* partake of this benefit from him. And men alſo are generally careful of beaſts in this condition, as *Jacob* took ſpecial care

Deut. 22. 6, 7.

Job 32. 31, 14. 15, 16. 17.

Exod. 23. 26.

Job 39. 1, 2, 3.

Gen. 31, 38. & 33. 13.

of

of *Labans* cattle, that they did not caſt their young; and in driving his own cattle, when he met his Brother *Eſau*, he was mindful to go ſuch a pace, as might *not hurt any creature with young*. *David*, when a ſhepheard, expreſſes that Calling by *following the Ewes great with young*. Implying, that his care of them, was double to what he had of the reſt of his flock.

Hence it is, that, when God would ſet forth to us the mild and gracious conduct of the Captain of our ſalvation Jeſus Chriſt, 'tis thus expreſſed, *He ſhall feed his flock like a ſhepheard, he ſhall gather the Lambs with his arms, and carry them in his boſom, and ſhall gently lead thoſe that are with young*. That is, ſhall uſe like tenderneſs and indulgence to the weak and infirm, as all ſober men do to creatures that are with young. Now, Is a *good man merciful to his beaſt*, and is not our good God merciful to his children in that condition? Doth God take care for fouls, fiſhes, and beaſts, even every beaſt of the forreſt; and doth *he not much more take care of you, O ye of little faith*? Hath he not implanted in all men a moſt tender regard to teeming women? Whence came elſe that law of the *Areopagites*, (whoſe famous laws were patterns to many nations) the like whereof, (or, at leaſt, the like cuſtom) we have in *England*, that, *Be a woman never ſo flagitious, and unworthy* Iſa. 40. 11. *Ælian. var. hiſt. lib. 5. p. (mihi) 404.*

worthy to live; yet if ſhe be with child, that ſhall priviledg her from the ſtroak of death, till ſhe be delivered and gotten to ſome ſtrength. I ſay, the Father of mercy doth infuſe this compaſſion into the minds of all men; and not only ſo, but hath given a moſt ſevere Exod. 21, 22,23,24. Law, for the ſharp puniſhment of all men, that ſhall accidentally hurt a woman with child, that *they ſhall give life for life, and limb for limb, or whatever puniſhment the husband ſhall think fit.*

Now what greater evidence would you have, of the merciful regard of our God and Saviour, than the particulars I have here propoſed? So that it muſt needs be a thing unreaſonable in you, and diſpleaſing to him, not to truſt in his name, and to caſt all your cares, fears, and burthens upon him.

An Example of the loving-kindneſs of our God to parents in this condition appears in what I have been certainly informed of, by a perſon of honour, who out of affection to Mr. *Dod*, for his eminency in the Church, went to viſit him, and had this from his own mouth. That Mr. *Dod*'s wife being long in travel with one of her children, the proviſion ſhe had made againſt that time was all ſpent and ſhe not yet delivered, at which Mrs. *Dod* was troubled, and her husband alſo, whereupon he went into his Study, ſpent much time in prayer,

and

and after prayer found abundance of quiet in his mind, and a total freedom from any further care about it; and ſtepping out to walk in the fields, he meets two men carrying a great Flasket, who were ſent to him with plenty of meat, bread and wine, from a Knight not far off, who expected the King that day in his Hunting, to dine with him, and being diſappointed, ſent this ſupply to Mr. *Dod*, to their great comfort. From all this I would inferr, that 'tis utterly a fault among Chriſtians who depend upon a great God to be of little faith. *Who ſo is wiſe will obſerve theſe things, even they ſhall underſtand the loving kindneſs of the Lord.* Pſal. 107. 43. That is, 'Tis our wiſdom ſo to conſider, and make obſervations on the gracious Providences of God to others; as to draw concluſions of hope and truſt in his Loving-kindneſs to us, when we are in the ſame, or greater neceſſities of what kind ſoever.

To all which, let me add the conſideration of his *All-ſufficiency* to help you in that condition; and this you will find, if well conſidered, to be *the ſureſt ſupport* you can fix your thoughts upon.

All creatures, by the inſtinct of nature, and providential gubernation, are apprehenſive of approaching dangers, and uſe the beſt means they can to ſecure themſelves. The ſubtile *Foxes have holes*, the fooliſh Deer their thickets, and *the conies, though a ſimple folk,*

folk, yet make they their holes in ſuch rocks and precipices, from whence no hand can pluck them. The wary Bird, eſpying the gun or ſnare of the Fowler, mounts aloft, and is ſafe from danger. Wherefore, when you grow bigger and bigger, and your heart grows big with fearful expectations of your approaching danger, ſhould you not pray, that God *would lead you to the rock that is higher than you*; which Rock is Chriſt? Should you not look upwards, and aſcend upwards daily in your thoughts, that ſo you may get above the hurt and peril of any affliction, yea, of death it ſelf? Do you not obſerve, that among creatures, thoſe are moſt active and powerful, that are furtheſt elevated and removed from groſs matter? You therefore extract, diſtil, *&c.* that you may have the quinteſſence and vertue of any herb more compendiouſly and effectually uſeful in your time of need. You ſee alſo, the water is more active than the dull earth, the air than the water, the fire than either of the three; and Angels excel (men, and all elements, and all creatures) in ſtrength; and God doth yet further exceed them than they do a worm. Therefore *to whom ſhould you go but to him*, who only hath the power of life and death?

It is *both commendable and common* in repenting ſinners, to count themſelves with the Apoſtle, *chief ſinners* (becauſe of ſome pecu-

peculiar circumſtances they eſpy in their own ſins, which they have cauſe to think are not common to be found in the ſins of others.) But is *more common than commendable* in afflicted perſons, to aggravate their ſorrows, like thoſe in the Prophet, *Behold and ſee! Is it nothing to you, all ye that paſs by? Is there any ſorrow like unto my ſorrow? &c.* So perhaps you think, There is none ſo like to miſcarry and periſh, none ever more unlikely to live than you. This is, doubtleſs your folly.

But be your infirmities, dangers, and ſad apprehenſions that you ſhall not be delivered of this child, ſo great, that you think none was ever under the like difficulties that did well: Yet I ſhall tell you, that I ſaw once a child of that ſtrange ſhape (which for fear of inconvenience I will not deſcribe) that one would have thought it utterly impoſſible it could be brought alive into the world, without more than the death of the mother. Yet when I askt her whether there was not more than ordinary pain and difficulty in its birth, ſhe told me, No, but that ſhe was delivered with as much eaſe of this as of her former children, and that alſo the ſame day ſhe was with like eaſe delivered of another child well ſhap'd and proportion'd. The monſtrous child lived but two dayes. The other lived many dayes; and when I ſaw the mother

ſhe

ſhe and her other child were well and like to live. The mother was the wife of one *John Waterman* of *Hiskerton Anger* near *Salisbury*; And this deliverance ſhe had *Octob.* 26. 1664. I tell you this for your comfort, that you may ſee how little theſe difficulties ſignifie with God.

For what improbabilities or ſeeming impoſſibilities can you labour under, which many others have not been exerciſed with and delivered from? *There is no new thing under the Sun.* Unleſs you are reſolved to believe nothing but your own unbelieving heart; you may hear and know of many, that have been, as weak, ſickly, bruiſed, hurt, diſeaſed, and ſufficiently afraid; yet have been ſafely delivered. But, be it ſo, that your caſe is ſingular and worſe than ordinary; yet cannot you ſay with the Apoſtle; *I know, whom I have truſted, that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him?* Believers truſt not *in an arm of fleſh* (*that is curſed*;) nor do *their hearts depart from the Living God*; but they truſt in him, *whoſe Name is a ſure Refuge*, whoſe Promiſe is a ſufficient Security, whoſe compaſſion is a ſufficient Motive to do good, and whoſe Power is allſufficient to accompliſh it.

Sennertus hath ſuch figures of children in the womb, as ſeem very ſtrange to reaſon how they could be delivered. Jer. 17. 5.

Therefore 'tis remarkable that in the Old Teſtament God did often exerciſe his handmaids with many improbabilities, before they had any children. As you may ſee in the

Stories

Stories of *Sarah*, *Rebeccah*, *Rachel*, *Leah*, *Hannah*, *Elizabeth*, and others. Now, they *conſidered not their own bodies though dead*, that is, paſt the uſual time of nature for childbearing, but, truſting in him who is able to create that which was not, or to quicken that which was dead, they continued in the Faith, and were the joyful mothers of children. *We had*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *the ſentence of death in our ſelves, that we might learn, not to truſt in our ſelves, but in God, which raiſeth the dead.* 2 Cor. 1. 9. As if he had ſaid, The God whom we truſt, is able to raiſe us, and will raiſe us hereafter out of our graves; how much eaſier is it to him to raiſe us out of our preſent danger and affliction.

Wherefore God himſelf is pleaſed, (to ſatisfie us once for all) to tell us, that women with child cannot be ſo hard put to it, but he can deliver them. For when he would expreſs his allſufficient Power, in giving the *Iſraelites* ſuch a deliverance, as they ſcarce could believe or expect, thus he doth expreſs it; *I will gather them from the coaſts of the earth, and with them the blind and the lame, the women with child, and her that travelleth with child together.* Jer. 31. 8. That is: though in your return from captivity *ſo long a journey* to *Jeruſalem*, you may think of many impoſſibilities, as, *We being poor and helpleſs, how is it poſſible but that teeming & labouring women, muſt miſcarry and periſh by the way?* Oh, ſaith God, I can ſtrengthen

ſtrengthen them, give them a ſpeedy and eaſie delivery, and make them *even in that condition* (without long ſtay and loſs of time) able to go forward, till they come into their own Land.

Zechar. 8. 6. Job 5. 9. Rev. 15. 3. So then, I ſay; If your apprehenſions of danger in your travel, do any way diſcourage your faith, yet let *Gods allſufficiency* put life into it. If to be delivered *be marvellous in your eyes, yet it is not marvellous in mine eyes, ſaith the Lord of hoſts.*

D. *Preſton of Gods Attributes p.* 196. But though we all acknowledg this in the notion, yet how few are there whoſe hearts are poſſeſſed with the power of this truth. As it is one thing to hear a thing in the notion, as for a man to think what he would do if he were a Pilot or a Captain; and another thing, 'to have it in the real managing, as 'when he is brought to fight. So it is here: 'It is one thing to ſay, I believe God is Almighty, and another thing to reſt upon it. For *not only the ſtubborn Iſraelites* did diſtruſt God in the wilderneſs; *and weak women*, as *Martha* and *Mary* queſtioned Chriſts power to raiſe *Lazarus*, becauſe he had been four dayes dead: *But* no leſs a man than *Moſes himſelf* queſtions how God could provide for ſix hundred thouſand in the wilderneſs. Wherefore, ſtrive with your unbelief, give to God the glory of his Power, Wiſdom, and Mercy; fix the apprehenſions thereof deeply upon your heart, and pray to the Author

John 11. 21. Numb. 11.

thor and Finiſher of Faith, to *help your unbelief*. Conclude with the wife of *Manaoh*, after you have mourned and prayed, with any hope of acceptation, *Surely, if the Lord had meant to deſtroy us, he would not have accepted a ſacrifice at our hands.* Labour for the faith of thoſe men and women of old, of whom it is written, that *by faith out of weakneſs they were made ſtrong, and women received their dead to life.*

Yet let not the thoughts of Gods alſufficiency paſs without one improvement more, which I ſhall give you in the words of a ſingular Di vine.

'If God be *Alſufficient*, then learn to be 'content with God alone; for all deſirable 'comforts are in him, as the effects are in the 'cauſe. As when Chriſt promiſes, that *If any 'leave houſe, or Brethren, or Siſters*, &c. *for his 'ſake and the Goſpel, they ſhall receive an hun-'dred fold now in this life, Houſes, Brethren,* 'and *Siſters*, &c. They ſhall receive the very 'ſame things, that is, they ſhall find the com-'fort of all theſe things in God. Therefore 'conſider, *what heaven is*. Do you think, that 'there you ſhall have a worſe condition than 'here; you have a variegated appetite full of 'multiplicity, you want many comforts and 'conveniences: but when you come to Hea-'ven, you do not lay aſide your nature, but 'deſire ſtill. And yet there you ſhall have 'none but God alone, ſo that if all this varie-

Dr. *Preſton* on the Attributes. Mark 10. 28, 29. 30.

'ty

'ty were not to be found in him, you could 'not be happy, even in Heaven it self. There-'fore he saith, that he will be All in all. Wherefore comfort your selves with these words.

CHAP. XIV.

Patience in the midst of their pains, The duty of travelling women.

I Know very well, that 'tis far more easie to prescribe patience to others, than to exercise it our selves. And therefore, if I tell women in this condition, that it would become them to be *less clamorous and vociferous in their outcries and scrieches*: They will soon reply, that *if we knew what they endur'd, we would not much blame them.* (a) I grant indeed, that the pains of a woman in travel are alwayes expressed in Scripture, as the fittest comparison to set forth *the greatest pains imaginable*, as may be seen in the places quoted in the margin. And that the same word in the Original signifies both *pains in travel* and pangs *of death*, as critical Annotators do observe on *Isa.* 26. 17. *Psal.* 18. 4. *Psal.* 116. 3. And that, in Scripture, the time of travel is commonly expressed by *crying out*, Isa. 26. 7. chap. 42. 14. And therefore I would not have any pious woman to misinterpret me, as if I counted it no less than sinful, to utter their com-

(a) Gen. 3. 16. Jer. 13. 21. ch. 20. 2. ch. 30. 6. ch. 49. 24. ch. 50. 43. Isa. 21. 3. Hos. 13. 13 Micah 4. 9, 10. Isa. 13. 8. Joh. 16. 21. 1 Thes. 5. 3. Psal. 48. 6. Rev. 12. 2.

complaints and outcries in the midſt of their torments; but I would think it *commendable* in any of them, if they would ſo arm themſelves with patience before-hand, that they might abate ſomewhat of thoſe dreadful groans and cries, which do ſo much diſcourage their friends and relations, that are near them, and do much amaze the hearts, and weaken the hands of thoſe ſtanders by, that they become the leſs helpful to them. But this is a ſmall matter to what I intend. Give your ſelf what liberty and eaſe you will, by pouring out your groans, ſo you look to *the chief thing*, that is, that your heart be all the while in a believing, praying, humble, patient, ſubmiſſive frame.

To help your patience herein, you muſt know, that my meaning is not, that you ſhould read, meditate, or perform any laborious duty at that time, but what I now mention as uſeful to you in that caſe, you muſt conſider of before that hour; and ſo poſſeſs your mind with the grounds and principles of patience, that patience may then have in you its perfect work.

To which end, conſider, that Sin is the procuring cauſe of all ſufferings; & therefore if we underſtood, felt, conſidered the weight, deſert, filth, and future evil of ſin, how could we have the face to complain of any evil but that, or to make any other outcry, but that of the Apoſtle, *O wretched man that I*

am, who ſhall deliver me from this body of death? How emphatical are theſe words of the Prophet, *Why ſhould a living man complain, a man for the puniſhment of his iniquities?* That is, ſeeing you are but a creature, a ſinful creature, and yet a living creature, puniſhed, not deſtroyed, puniſhed for your iniquities, which deſerve far worſe; why ſhould you complain, ſeeing it is the Lords mercy you are not conſumed? Suppoſe a Ship, after a long voyage, being come into harbour, ſprings a leak; the Maſter is ſomewhat troubled at it, and is never quiet till it be ſtopped, ſo that it is an evil to him; yet he comforts himſelf in this, that it did not happen to him when he was out at Sea; that had been a great deal worſe, and might have proved the ruine of them all: So there is this comfort in all our ſorrows, that they happen to us in this life; we feel they are upon us, but bleſſed be God they are upon us here in this world, ſo that by a ſanctified uſe to be made of them, they ſhall not be upon us in the world to come.

Conſider alſo, whoſe hand it is that inflicts theſe ſorrows upon you. Your pangs and throws, as they were procured by Sin, ſo they are diſpoſed by the Lord. This made *Job* ſo patient; *The Lord giveth, and the Lord taketh away.* This made *Eli* ſubmiſſive, when *Samuel* told him of the ruine of his family, *It is the Lord, let him do what ſeemeth him good.* 1 Sam. 3. 18.

Yea,

Yea, this made *David* ſo ſilent, *I was dumb, and opened not my mouth, becauſe thou Lord didſt it.* So do you reaſon with your ſelves, Shall not I drink of *the cup of trembling*, ſeeing 'tis in *the hand of the Lord my God*, who will give me only ſo much as ſhall profit me, and not deſtroy me? Shall I not ſtand under that croſs that *he hath laid* on my ſhoulders, and ſtoop to that yoke, that *he impoſes* on my neck. Bears and Lions take blows from their keepers, and ſhall I not bear any thing from *my keeper and preſerver*? Children take bitter Phyſick from the Mother, and hard blows from a Father; and ſhall not I be in ſubjection to *the Father of Spirits*, and live? I cannot, I muſt not contend with *my Maker*, I will therefore humbly bend *to him*, leaſt *he* break me, and I will not make my croſs heavier by impatience, than *he* hath made it by *his providence.*

Look alſo to the *examples of patience*, which are ſuch as will abundantly ſhame us, if we murmure and repine at the hand of the Lord upon us.

God himſelf *is preſſed with our ſins, as a cart is preſſed that's ful of ſheaves*, yet is ſtill *patient and long ſuffering to us-ward, not willing that we ſhould die and periſh in our ſins, but turn and live.*

The Lord Jeſus endured innumerable injuries, unſpeakable agonies, and intolerable grievances at his death; yet *as a ſheep before*

the ſhearer, ſo opened he not his mouth, he did neither ſtrive nor cry, neither was his voice heard in the ſtreets. And, alas! what are your pains in compariſon of his? The holy Spirit, our ſanctifier and comforter is exceedingly *vexed* and *grieved* at our yielding to many ſins and corruptions; yet forſakes us not utterly, but *waits all the day long, knocking at the doors of our hearts*, and patiently expecting our reformation.

The holy Church of God hath been, from the firſt planting thereof, continually *toſſed to and fro*, with what tempeſts Satan could raiſe againſt them.

Heb. 11. 36,37,38. They have been continually aſſaulted with the wild beaſts of the wilderneſs, ſtung with fiery ſerpents, expoſed to wants, hardſhips, dangers, &c. They have *had trials of cruel mockings and ſcourgings, of bonds & impriſonment. They were ſtoned, they were ſawn aſunder, were tempted, were ſlain with the ſword; they wandred about in Sheep-skins and goat-skins, being deſtitute, afflicted, tormented, of whom the world was not worthy*, &c.

Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtories and Martyrologies are pregnant with moſt famous inſtances of the patience of the Saints, under ſuch torments, as ordinary men have not the hardineſs to inflict, much leſs the patience to endure. But 'tis a tried rule, than which none more certain, that God never calls his people to any ſuffering, but he will be with them

them, to enable them to bear it. But, leaſt you ſhould think, that the examples are all of the ſtronger ſex, I ſhall mention only a few (whereas I could many more) of the ſingular examples of Womens patience, in ſuch pains, as do, I think, equal the pains in travel.

'*Blandina*, a chriſtian woman, being 'brought before the Heathen Judges, for the 'Faith of Chriſt, when as all her friends quak- 'ed for fear, leaſt, at the time of her anſwer '(by reaſon of the frailty of the Fleſh) ſhe 'ſhould not be conſtant; ſhe was ſo repleniſh- 'ed with grace from above, that the Execu- 'tioners which *tormented her by turns from* '*morning to night*, fainted for wearineſs, and 'ceaſed; confeſſing themſelves overcome, '& that they were no longer able to plague 'her with any more puniſhments, wondring 'that ſhe yet drew breath having her *whole* '*body rent in peices, and the wounds open:* They 'confeſſing withal that one of theſe torments 'was ſufficient to coſt her her life, much 'more ſo many and ſo great. But this bleſſed 'woman (like a noble wreſtler) was renewed 'at her confeſſion; for as often as ſhe ſaid, *I* '*AM A CHRISTIAN*, ſhe was refreſhed, and felt no pain of her puniſhment. *Euſeb. Eccl. Hiſt. lib. 5. cap. 1.*

'*Potamiena*, a chaſt and moſt beautiful 'Virgin having ſuffered infinitely, for the 'Faith of Chriſt; laſt of all, after *great and* '*grievous torments, terrible to be ſpoken of*, toge- 'ther with her Mother *Marcella*, was burned *Euſeb. lib. 6. cap. 7.*

'with fire. Her body was first *cruelly tor-*
'*mented with scourges, and afterwards boyling*
'*pitch powred upon her* from the crown of her
'head to the sole of her feet.

Euseb. l. 6. cap. 40. '*Quinta*, for refusing their Idols, had her '*feet bound* together, and by them *trailed &* '*lugg'd along the streets, which were paved with* '*sharp stones; & being beaten against Milstones,* 'and *sorely scourged*, she was brought to the 'Place of Execution and there put to death.

Ibidem. '*Mercuria*, an honest Matron, and *Dionysia*, 'a very *fruitful woman for childbearing* (*which* '*Children notwithstanding she preferred not be-*'*fore the Lord*) when they had confounded 'the Judge, which used all kind of perswasi-'ons, after they were *so tormented, that they* '*were past all sense and feeling*, they were be-'headed with the sword. But *Ammonarion* a 'holy Virgin passed them all, notably endu-'ring *all kind of torment*, saith the Author.

Euseb. lib. 8. cap. 25. '*Theodosia*, a modest christian Maid of *Tyrus* 'not fully eighteen years old, came to some 'christian prisoners, who were at their try-'al, to comfort them, and was forthwith 'haled by the catchpoles before their Judg, 'who presently *scourged her bare sides with* '*bitter and grievous lashes, renting with the* '*whip her white breasts and tender dugs, to the* '*bare bones*. At length this holy Virgin scarce 'breathing, yet *patient enough for all these* '*punishments*; was thrown into the Sea, and 'there drowned.

'*Enna-*

'*Ennathus* a chriſtian Virgin, was *cruelly* Idem ib.
'*ſcourged and tormented*, and *patiently bear-* cap. 27.
'*ing it*, was burned quick.

I have ſet down theſe memorable inſtances in the very words of the Hiſtorian, and I ſay the pains there mentioned are ſuch as do well nigh *equal* the pangs of travel.

But thoſe bleſſed women ſuffered for God, and therefore had both his aſſiſtance and acceptance. But my pains are the meer fruit of ſin, and of the curſe. And therefore what are theſe inſtances to the purpoſe? What do they concern women in travel? Object.

All afflictions of whatever kind are the fruit of ſin. 'Tis ſin, that cauſed the enmity in the ſeed of the Serpent againſt the ſeed of the Woman. 'Tis by ſin, that we are *born to trouble*, are *of few dayes and full of evil*. 'Tis ſin that fills the creature with vanity, under which *the whole Creation groans and travels in pain together until now*. Sin is the Mother and Nurſe of our miſeries. So that if it be a ſufficient reaſon for you to be dejected and impatient under your pains, becauſe they are the fruit of ſin, then there is the like reaſon for every afflicted perſon to complain and deſpond, and *refuſe to be comforted*, even Martyrs themſelves; for no croſs could befall us in life, nor any violent death have been inflicted upon us, if ſin had not made ſo wide a gap, at which all calamities do enter upon us. Hence it is, that the Church did alway Anſw.

acknowledge Gods Justice in all the evils that came upon them. And the Emperour *Mauritius*, when bloody Villains came and kill'd his wife and children before his face, and then came to murther him also, uttered no other words but these; *Righteous art thou, O Lord, and just are thy judgments.*

But the main thing you speak of, wherein they had the advantage, is this, that *they suffered for God*, and so do not you.

That this apprehension should be in the mind of any good women now, I the less wonder, because I find that *Sabina* a *Roman* Lady, being great with child, was imprisoned for the christian religion. And when her pains of travel were upon her, she cryed out with extreme pain (as other women:) Says the Jaylor, if thou cryest out thus now, how wilt thou do a few dayes hence to endure burning at the stake? To which she answered, Now I suffer as a woman the punishment of my sin, but then I shall not suffer, but Christ shall suffer in me.

Manlius in Loc. com.

But let me tell you, that neither the punishment, be it never so bitter, nor the cause, be it never so good, do make a compleat Martyr without Patience. If this patience be wanting, that they be unquiet, murmuring & clamorous under the hand of God, I doubt they shall not be so soon canonized in Heaven as here upon Earth. Their sufferings are not accepted if not patiently endured. They do not

die

die to the Lord, unleſs they lay down their lives, and offer themſelves a willing ſacrifice; dying out of love to God, not out of unwilling ſubjection to the violence of Man.

Want of Patience, ſhews want both of Faith and Love. And if we want theſe, we are but as *ſounding braſs and tinkling Cymbals.* If there be any thing we keep from God, and reſign not up all readily and intirely to him; we give him nothing, but we love ſomething more than him. But if we part with a little willingly, if we be chearful givers of our money to the needy, and *honour the Lord with our ſubſtance*, this is thank-worthy with God, becauſe *'tis ſuppoſed that* the mortified mind is alike ready, when God requires it, to part with the whole for Chriſt.

The ſame principle (if a right principle act us) that inclines us to give a *penny*, muſt prompt us alſo to yield up *all, even life it ſelf*, when God requires it. And where there is this habitual forſaking of all in affection, out of acknowledgment of God's right to all we have, this mental reſolution is with God *interpretative* Martyrdom. So then obſerve, that in all our Actions or Sufferings for God, we muſt not lay ſo much ſtreſs on the thing it ſelf, as the principle, and end aimed at by the doer or ſufferer: *God always accepts the will for the deed* (when impoſſibilities are the only bars to our performance) *but he never accepts the moſt coſtly actions or ſufferings without a willing mind.* The

Nec pœna nec cauſa ſed patientia facit martyrem.

The upshot of all is this, that if we are sick with any natural or adventitious malady, pained with any hurtful, or accidental casualty, when we suffer any loss in our Estates, or torments in our flesh; if then our *patience have its perfect work*, if we submit to the will of God, and lye down under his hand, as *Isaac* under the hand of *Abraham*, *trusting in his name*, and saying, with *Job*, *though he kill me, yet will I trust in him*; if we bear all cheerfully, out of obedience to Him, who disposes and sanctifies all to his people: this is acceptable with God, *this is suffering for God, this is glorifying God in the fire; and the Spirit of God and of glory shall rest upon such.*

I do not question but the admirable patience and constancy of Mr. *Whittaker*, (that famous Minister of Christ in *Southwark*) who in the midst of most accute pains from the Stone, with which he was *tormented to death*, did yet silence all complaints of the flesh, and not suffer a groan without recalling it to pass from him; still blessing and praising God, and so enduring to his last, to the astonishment of all beholders: I say, I doubt not but his incredible patience, wherein principles of grace did suppress the cryes of nature, was as acceptable to God as the more famed sufferings of those that were cut off by the hand of cruel men. Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his Saints, especially that death that gives most tryal

of

of their precious faith and perfect patience. Therefore *lift up the hands that hang down, and the feeble knees, & be not wearied nor faint in your minds,* remembring that *if you thus ſuffer in obedience to him, you ſuffer for him,* & may lay hold therefore of Gods promiſes to the afflicted, which do equally concern you with any other ſufferers.

Again, you have ſtrange examples among *the Papiſts*, what the women of that ſect will inflict on their own tender bodies, in their times of pennance. Take but one inſtance: 'Elizabeth, Dutcheſs of *Turaine*, was wont, 'at certain times, to provide moſt cruel 'ſcourges, and taking three or four of her 'maids with her, ſhut her ſelf into her clo- 'ſet, and gave to each of them a ſcourge in 'their hands, and ſtripping her ſelf naked 'commanded them to lay her on *with luſty* 'ſtripes; and this ſhe endured with ſuch wil- 'ling patience, that ſhe would *never groan or* 'cry *under* their laſhes. Now if thoſe delicate Ladies can ſo patiently bear any (the moſt unmerciful) chaſtiſements they lay upon themſelves, how much more ſhould you bear the chaſtiſement of your heavenly Father, who is not inſenſible of the ſmart he puts you to, and will not be unmindful *to give you an expected end.* *Spalatenſ. lib. 3. c. 10. 129.*

Conſider further, how gracious our God is in his readineſs *to ſupport* his people under all afflictions: 'I have read of one (*a*) *Theodorus* *Socr. Schol. lib 3. c. 16.*

'*dorus* a Martyr put to extreme torments, 'by *Julian* the Apostate, and dismissed again 'by him, when they saw him so invincible. (b) *Ruffin. hist. Eccles. lib.* 1. *cap.* 36. 'The historian sayes (*b*) he met with this 'Martyr a long time after and asked him, 'how he could bear such unsufferable pains, 'he answered, *that at first it was grievous*, but 'after a while there seemed to stand by him '*a young man in white*, who with a soft hand-'kerchief wiped off the sweat from his bo-'dy, and bad him *be of good cheer*: insomuch 'that it was *a punishment, rather than a plea-'sure, to be taken from off the rack*, sith when the Tormenters had done, the Angel was gone. Thus when our friends can do little for us, God can send *his Angels who excell in strength*, to suggest comfort, & minister help to us. But *however*, he himself will always be with us, *to make our beds in our sickness, to support* our tyred bodies *with his everlasting Arms*, and to *uphold our souls with his free Spirit*. Thus our Saviour promises to all his people in whatever condition they be; *I will not leave you comfortless, but I will come unto you.*

Yea God will be not only *nigh you*, but *careful for you* in the hour of your extremity, to *lay no more upon you than you shall be able to bear.*

There was *an host of Angels*, near enough; though the Prophet's man could not presently see them. There was a sacrifice at hand, though *Isaac*, at present, saw nothing but

but death before him. *Hagar*, when her bottle of water was ſpent, *ſate down and wept*, (as if utterly undone) her proviſion and her patience, her bottle and her hope were both out together: Yet there was upon the very place ſufficient ſupply, though ſhe did not perceive it, till her eyes were opened: when therefore your bodily eyes ſhall look round about, and ſee your friends mourning and taking on, leaving you as hopeleſs; and you cannot ſee any one among them of whom you can ſay, *that perſon is able to help me*: yet with the eye of your faith you may *ſee him who is inviſible, ſtanding at your right hand*, & ready and able to deliver you, when it comes even to *the moſt deſperate extremity*.

Gen. 21. 19.

Pſal. 90. 30.

The Poets have feigned a ſtory of *Pandora*, 'that ſhe had a box given her, fraught and 'ſtuffed with all the miſeries that might be, 'only, *Hope was plac'd in the bottom*. *Epimetheus* raſhly opening it, a ſwarm of miſeries 'flew about his ears, which he perceiving 'clapt the cover on the box again with all 'poſſible ſpeed, and ſo with much ado *ſaved 'hope ſitting in the bottom*. Thus by the heedleſs folly of the firſt Woman, a whole army of miſeries hath invaded the world, and many ſorrows have been inflicted upon travelling women. But bleſſed be God, that hath yet *left us hope, that anchor of the ſoul, both ſure and ſtedfaſt*. Let us therefore keep our hope, in all extremities, yea *againſt hope believe in*

Cæl. Rhodig. Vdr. lect. l. 9.

Pſa. 33. 11. 147. 11. Heb. 6. 13.

hope

Rom 4. 18. *hope as Abraham did.* And carry our selves under our afflictions, as those that have *hope towards God. Rejoycing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing instant in prayer:* For God doth often delay his mercies, that he may exercise these graces in us. As some report of *the Lyonness* that she leaves the young whelps so long, til they have *almost killed themselves* with roaring and yelling, and *then she comes* and relieves them, by which means they become the more couragous, and the *more patient* of hunger. Thus God leaves *Sarah* to be childless; *Hannah* to mourn in bitterness of Soul for want of children; *Elizabeth* to be called barren; *Rachel* to kill her self almost with fretting for want of children. He leaves *Jonah* three days and three nights *in the belly of Hell*, makes *Job* childless, leaves him *comfortless* and *helpless*, as to any longer life; leaves *Heman free among the dead*, and *David groaning and roaring* under intolerable evils. Yea the tribes of *Jacob* to be as so many *dry bones*; *Lazarus* to be *stinking* in the grave; *Dorcas* to be *dead* and *lamented*; And *all hope that they should be saved, was gone*, from those that were in the ship with the Apostles: * I say, thus God leaves his people under pressing

Rom. 12. 12.

Job. 6. 11.

Ps. 38, 2. 3.

Act. 17. 20.

* *Hinc colligimus preposterè facere eos, qui æstimant Dei gratiam ex præsenti statu. Atqui hoc vitium ferè ingenitum est nobis à naturâ, & occupat sensus omnes nostros: hinc tanta diffidentia; & hinc fit, ut omnes Dei promissiones apud nos frigeant. Nam cum Deus aliquid promittit, circumspicimus quomodo fieri possit, & si mentes nostræ non comprehendunt modum & rationem, repudiamus quicquid profectum est ex ore Dei, &c.* Calvin. *in* Jerem. 31. 8. *p.* 243.

cala-

calamities and appearances of nothing but deſtruction, that he may the more glorifie himſelf, and comfort them in their deliverance and ſalvation at laſt. Therefore ſeeing *the times and ſeaſons are in his hand*, and *he hath made every thing beautiful in its ſeaſon*, what is more becoming than to wait his time, as *the husband-man patiently expects* the time of harveſt, the Mariner waits for wind and tide, and the watch-man waits for the approach of the day? And though it may come to a critical extremity, yet *in the Mount of the Lord it ſhall be ſeen.*

But to draw to a concluſion. *Above all things labour before this hour come to lay hold on Chriſt, by Faith*, and then you will have the like comfort with that good woman in the *Marian* perſecution, who being brought before *Bonner*, and tried concerning her faith, he threatned, that he would take away her husband; *ſaith ſhe, Then Chriſt ſhall be my husband*; I will take away thy Child; *ſhe anſwered, Chriſt is better to me than ten Sons*; I will ſtrip thee of all thy outward comforts; *Yea, but Chriſt is mine, ſaid ſhe, and you cannot ſtrip me of him.* So let this ſettle and eſtabliſh your mind, if Chriſt be yours *all is yours*, as far as ſhall be for your good. Though your travel may perhaps take away all ſtrength from you, yet *it cannot take away Chriſt*, though it may coſt perhaps the life of the child to ſave your life, yea though it ſhould

coſt

coſt your life alſo; yet ſtill *Chriſt is yours*, and therefore *Death is yours*. So that if God ſee it good for you, for your family and relations, that you ſhould live longer, he can *command deliverance for you*; if otherwiſe, yet *good is the word of the Lord*. Wherefore keep faſt hold of Chriſt by faith; and then *though you paſs through the valley of the ſhadow of death, you need fear no evil*, for when your voice fails you, the Lord will hear thoſe *groans that cannot be uttered*; when your eyes fail you, *the Lord will be a light unto you*; *when your fleſh and your heart faileth, God ſhall be the ſtrength of your heart, and your portion for ever.*

To him I leave you. He ſupply in you by his own grace, whatever is defective in theſe directions and helps I have given.

Luk. 1.45. *And bleſſed is ſhe that believeth, for there ſhall be a performance of thoſe things that were told her from the Lord.*

Lo this, we have ſearched it, ſo it is, hear it, and know thou it for thy good. Job. 5.27.

If any Reader find any good by it; Give glory to God,

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